



野生の

ボス

が現れた!

炎頭

Yahako

1

# **A WILD LAST BOSS APPEARED**

**– Yasei no Rasubosu ga Arawareta! –**

**- VOLUME 1 -**

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**[ Shurim's 3am translations | Hand of Vecna ]**

## - STORY -

It was in the year 2800 of the Midgard calendar. Back then, there was a Overlord who once reigned supreme and had reached the very brink of subduing the world.

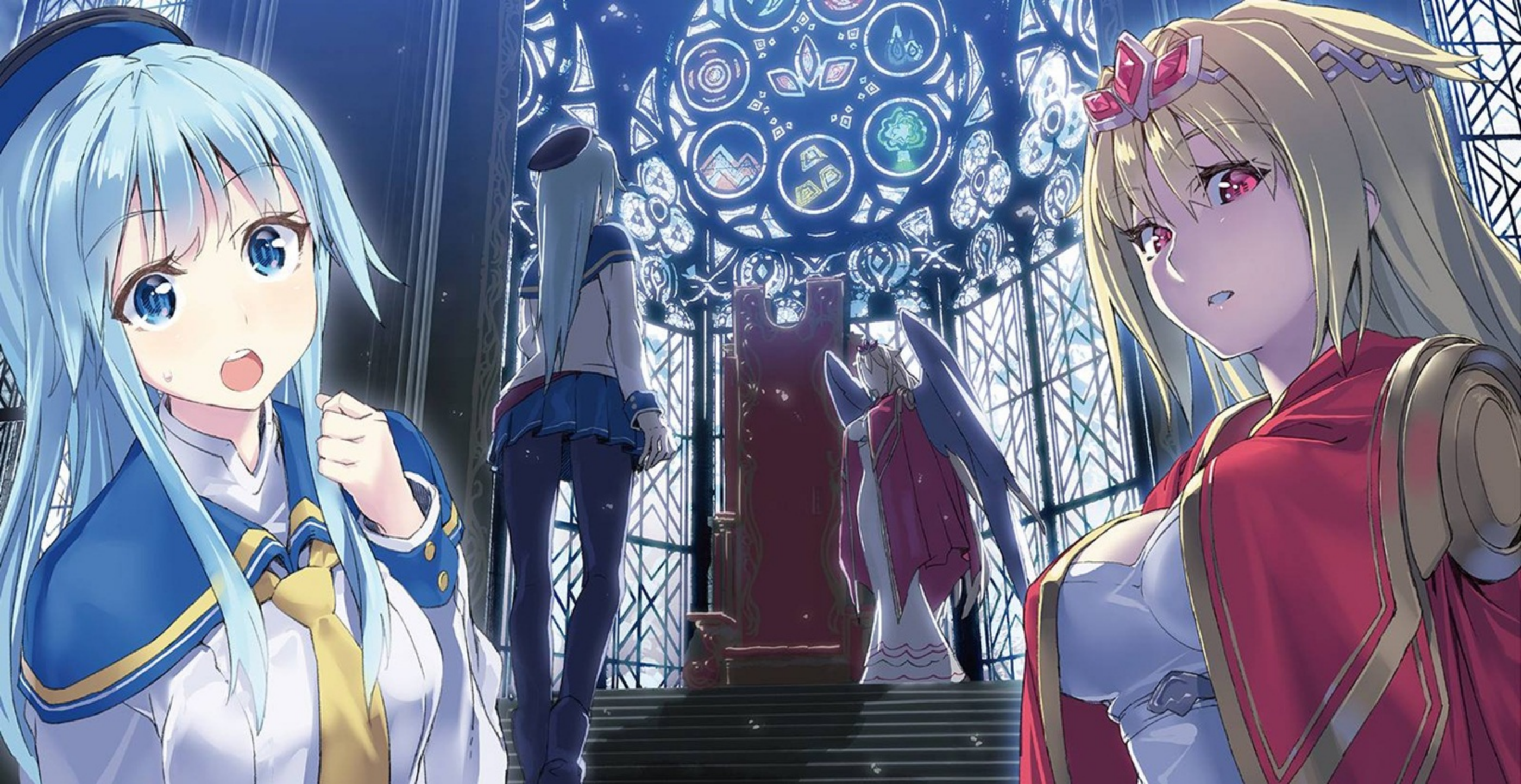
Her name was Ruphas Mafahl, a great woman dreaded as the Black-Winged Overlord.

She was too strong, too fast, and too beautiful...

However, she was defeated by Heroes who opposed her ferocity, and her ambition was brought to an end.

—or so went the story of our protagonist's in-game character, whose body he now possesses for some reason in a world 200 years after Ruphas' downfall. Follow our protagonist as he becomes unnecessarily feared by his surroundings and unnecessarily worshiped by his former subordinates as he—or now she—cheerfully travels around this fantasy world.









wild  
final boss  
appeared!

Illustration: Luluko



野生の  
炎頭

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ILL.  
Yahako

# ブスボス

w i l d  
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# Chapter 1

## A Wild Last Boss Appeared

Everyone was frozen in place—the king on his throne, the soldiers at their posts, the magicians in the hall, and the 200-year-old advisor by the king. They were all overwhelmed, captivated, and terrified.

Golden hair tinged with a maroon hue at its ends, eyes that shone crimson like the setting sun, and a scarlet overcoat that hugged her perfectly proportioned body—she was so beautiful that the world turned just to look at her. Yet, poking out from the overcoat was the symbol of the flugel race—the large, jet black wings of taboo.

As if greeting the true sovereign of the nation, everyone hung their heads before her, trembling in fear. To raise their heads was impossible, to gaze upon her was unthinkable. The retainers could only continue to grovel before her as if to pay their respects.

Radiating an aura of domination and surrounded by prostrating figures, she truly took on the appearance of a ruler. What's more, her every motion brimmed with an unbridled confidence.

And in the midst of this maelstrom.

Having forced the entirety of the castle into submission without a lifting a finger, the young girl silently smiled and thought to herself.

*The hell? Why are all these strangers bowing their heads to me? What is this? Some kind of practical joke? What do they want from me? What just happened? Someone help!?*

It was none other than the young girl herself whose mental state was in the most disorder.

Exactly how did things turn out this way? I guess I must first explain this in order. However, there is something I need to say before I explain. I'm actually a man. An exceedingly normal, healthy man. And with that in mind, I humbly request your audience.

Let's see... I was playing games like any other day.

"X-gate online." It was a game launched six years back, in the year 2027.

The RPG, taking place in the world of Midgard, became popular enough to be adapted into an open-world TRPG. The original was an online game as well, but unfortunately, I didn't have the proper game console to play it.

...well, I did consider buying it. The Dreamstation, I mean.

The Dreamstation was a console manufactured over 20 years ago, so it was pretty difficult to get your hands on. What's more, we didn't have a second-hand store in our neighborhood. Well, it is what it is. Without any major twists, the game created a friendly experience for beginners. Like most RPG's, monsters, elves, fairies, and a great variety of races decorated the map.

Just as the game was released, I stumbled upon it as a high school student. I had no expectations, but free food is the best food, so I gave it a go.

The result—a complete addiction. I became the so-called 'fanatic'.

I dedicated as much time my schedule could afford. Eventually, I obtained cash shop items, for which I even picked up a simple side job I could do from home.

Why work at home?... I wouldn't be able to game if I left the house.

Even my time spent at school felt wasted. And Naturally, I was a faithful member of the go-home club. My happiness—and the happiness of the great majority of players was something decided by how soon we could see the login page again. As the number addicts increased, a law was passed to regulate the distribution of online games. Then, in accordance with the regulation, "X-gate Online" limited the daily playing time to ten hours. As a result, I was able to obtain the same login time as other players while commuting to school. This way, I was able to maintain my status as one of the highest ranked players.

I continued to nurture my in-game character, frantically leveling and alternating between various character classes.

One of the most appealing aspects of the game was the expansive character customization. There were... 8,687,500 different character customizations in total. The ability to freely combine those options allowed for an infinite variety of avatars.



This further enabled your ability to foster your love for your own character.

Using this system, the character I created, Ruphas Mafahl, was a young girl of the flugel race. The flugel was one of the game's many races. It was one capable of flight and possessed extraordinary basic abilities in exchange for being unable to learn all classes of magic. They were also nicknamed the "race of rulers" and were endowed with high charisma and the ability to tame monsters the moment they were born.

These abilities were reflected in the actual gameplay. Furthermore, the flugels had a skill that nullified attacks from opponents with a significant level difference to their own.

This skill was rendered ineffective during boss battles, though.

I trained and trained Ruphas. I armed her with cash shop equipment and participated in every in-game event possible. Before long, I established a nation, which would expand my character's influence. It started off small, but steadily grew in size.

The game also included a feature that allowed you to wage "war". Two countries would fight with all their might, and the losing nation would be absorbed into the winner's realm of influence. Using this system, Ruphas reaped countless victories from hundreds of nations. Of course, although it's called an "invasion", both nations needed to give their consent. Attacking without an agreement would leave you shunned by the entire community.

There was one more unique feature in the game: the "novel system". Made in collaboration with one of the largest online publishers, the system allows players to compile their actions into a "formal history" similar to a fiction novel.

"For this reason, I waged war."

"We suffered through so many hardships to fulfill this request."

If you sent these to the official website, the accepted narrations would actually appear on the homepage and be implemented into the game.

If you paid the money, even a small accomplishment could be written as a glorious tale. As a result, there were unique backstories wherever you went in "X-gate Online", and all players served as protagonists of the story. In addition, if there was a major turning point in the game, the event would be recorded into "history" for free.

Known by every single player, my character, Ruphas, even became a semi-official character of the game. She crushed all opposing forces, becoming the first ruler to unite all of mankind under one sphere of influence.

The black wings of dread—Ruphas Mafahl. At one point in time, I held the entire world of Midgard in the palm of my hand, creating an era of my own.

As one would expect, the Demon King and his followers could not be brought into submission, but other than solo players, all players became citizens of Ruphas' nation.

This became a major event recorded in the novel system. Displayed alongside the demon king as the “wild last boss”, I was often told “Ruphas should just replace the last boss” and other remarks along these lines.

However, there was a problem. Frankly, the game was boring with a single overlord. The long-awaited war functionality was rendered useless, and it became extremely difficult for novice players to establish their own nations. That's when I sparked a discussion with higher level players and planned a massive event upon player suggestions.

I even consulted a popular author on the publishing site and wrote up our own turning point of history.

The story went something like this. With her overwhelming military might, Overlord Ruphas invaded and unified the world. However, a group of heroes assembled from the far corners of the world. Grasping the chance to revolt, they naturally confronted the great evil in the name of goodwill! Oh valiant heroes, I commend you for your great courage. Now is the time to break free of the chains of tyranny and overthrow the throne!

I played the villain. Ruphas then split her territory into two parts in secret. Then, with Ruphas leading the imperial army and the heroes leading the rebel forces, a battle of incomparable scale took place.

Long story short, I lost. All the prominent players played the opposing team. On the other hand, our forces consisted of roughly eighty percent of low-level players who didn't stand a chance against their experienced opponents. Nevertheless, I stood my ground until the very end, and before I knew it, I was the only one left alive. By this time, my HP had been reduced to a measly two points.



It was damage taken from a single attack. In a preemptive strike, we were able to exhaust the opponent's stamina and health, but they activated the skill, [Switch Places], immediately after. Then, the heroes staged their glorious victory as planned.

On top of barraging us with overkill attacks, they went as far to seal us into a different subspace, prolonging our revival time. Since it would have been awkward to be defeated in silence, I read some cool lines before being sealed

"Magnificent! That was magnificent, heroes! You have clearly expressed your overwhelming power! A party of your caliber might just be able to stand up to the Demon King!"

You can tell I was at the peak of puberty.

Defeated, Ruphas went into hiding and the world was freed from her rule—or so the event was portrayed in the completed story

It gained quite the reputation, receiving comments like "So I'm fine with the story ending here?", "Nice finale", "Hey, don't just forget about the Demon King (LOL)!", "Demon King? Ah, you mean the guy who's been hiding until Ruphas-sama was done in. Uuuh, what was his name again?", and "You guys are too cruel XDDDDDD".

Although defeated, I felt satisfied with playing my part in a major event. I sat in a dark room, a wide grin lit by only the light of my display.

The following day, a familiar character greeted me from the login page. Alovenas, the goddess of genesis, waved from the screen. She was, to put it bluntly, the representation of game administration.

She often made her appearance in tutorials and in-game event announcements. Her offensive ability, HP, and defensive power were definite numbers, but it was not something you could possibly match. Hell, she had 999 billion HP. Even boss characters have a threshold of around a million. This official cheater showed up to tell me something.

"Would you like to be granted a new role?"

Presently, Ruphas was listed beside the Demon King as one of the major boss characters of "X-gate online". Naturally, the administrators couldn't just keep quiet. After being defeated in such a dramatic manner, casually logging back in would be a

bit too anticlimactic.

Moreover, if I just strolled back into the game, what would happen to the story? Thinking that this message was a godsend, I hit “yes” without a second thought. I’ve devoted thousands of hours to this game. That’s why, regardless of what kind of role it was, I would accept the challenge head-on.

I thou—.

Then, my vision blacked out.



And we have now arrived at the present situation. Prostrating figures surround me. A heavy weight on my chest and sense of loss between my legs. My body is wrapped in a dress and overcoat. Long hair frames my field of vision and a pair of wings sprout from my back. With strangely clear eyesight, I gaze at a distant window, where the appearance of an absurdly beautiful girl is reflected.

I... turned into Ruphas?

Nonono, no waaaay. I’m male, you know? Ruphas is female, you know?

I spent grueling hours customizing a beauty to suit my tastes, but I’ve never once wished to *be* Ruphas. You see, what I’m trying to say is that the entire appeal of a female avatar is the occasional peek at her goods and I can’t see shit from this angle!

“...hmpf, I don’t quite understand the current situation... so is someone going to explain it to me?”





...heeeey. I knew my voice would change. That was expected. But this arrogance in my voice! Somehow, when I tried to say “Sorry, I don’t really understand the current situation. I would really appreciate it if someone would give an explanation.” the words came out of my mouth in a needlessly haughty tone. Come to think of it, wasn’t this the tone I used to roleplay Ruphas?

“What’s wrong, children of mankind? Raise your heads. How long do you plan on prostrating? Or is that your normal posture? In that case, let me apologize for my ignorance.”

—What’s wrong? Please raise your heads. If you continue to maintain that posture, I won’t be able to stand the embarrassment. Or if you would pardon me for asking, is that your normal posture? In that case, I apologize for my lack of common sense—is what I tried to say. I sound way too oppressive.

No matter what I try to say, it’ll just end up sounding haughty again. What do I even do?

...ah, I see! It was my [Coercion] skill! Uuuh, I’m positive you could switch it on and off... calm down already, [Coercion]! Ugh, the pressure is unbearable...!

“...ah, I see. Pardon my carelessness. It would be hard to converse with this activated.”

[Coercion] off! There was no convenient computer window, but I dealt with the problem through intuition. As for whether my attempt was successful, the people who were prostrating before me finally raised their heads and cast their trembling gazes upon me.

“Wo—woah... This figure... No way... so you were alive...”

The gentleman dressed like a Shinto priest mumbled a trembling voice. How rude. I have no recollection of having died before. Ah, but Ruphas died just the other day, though.

“Ye—Yeah, we made an incredible miscalculation. An unforgivable... unforgivable mistake. During the summoning of a hero, we have instead undone the seal on the Overlord...”

“—hmp, I see. Seems like this man knows who I am. Then let’s have you explain the situation to me.”



It seems like this man knows who I am. Then it would be better to ask him for an explanation. To grant him a peace of mind, I smiled and gently informed him of my harmlessness.

“Don’t be so afraid, child of man. I won’t do any harm to you and your compatriots... just relax, and start talking.”

—but there really is nothing I can do about this haughtiness, is there.

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## 【The setting you don't really have to remember】

- X-gate online.

The original game ran on the Dreamstation game console and was eventually converted into a TRPG and an MMO as well. It was not a VR.

Unlike all the MMORPG's so far, it resembled a TRPG. For instance, when changing classes, you could retain the skills of your previous class in secrecy.

In collaboration with one of the largest online publishing sites, player actions and choices were recorded as a story.

(However, in reality, whether your actions would really be written about actually just depended on how the authors felt about it. Players would submit drafts that said "this is how it all played out!" and if you were lucky, it would be picked up by an author and written as a story. There are also authors who would accept money for the service, and it was plenty possible to record your accomplishments by paying. However, not just anyone could become an author. They were properly picked out by the administration and rarely would you find a shitty story.)

While standing in a gray area between an RPG and a TRPG, the game also comprised of the elements of a novel, giving it the peculiar title of an MMONRPG (Mass Multiplayer Online Novel Role Playing Game).

This system had quite the reputation with players crazed over character personalization. Nevertheless, a number of players felt nothing from their actions being written as a story.

Six years after its release, the game has a total of over 8 million players internationally. It was fundamentally free-to-play, but as you proceeded throughout the game, it would continue to pressure you to spend real money.

The game was produced by Niente Corporation.

# Chapter 2

## A Wild Last Boss Takes To The Skies

The black-winged ruler, Ruphas Mafahl.

200 years ago, in the year 2800 of the Midgard calendar, a supreme being wearing the appearance of a lovely young girl distinguished herself.

With a swing of her arm, she could sever the necks of dragons the size of mountains.

With a matter of moments, she could traverse the distance of a thousand miles.

Haughtiness and unparalleled cruelty. No matter who rose up against her, she crushed them mercilessly.

The weak barely had the strength to stand in her presence. The strong were torn apart like flimsy scraps of paper and discarded along the roadside. As the only person who the Demon King avoided, many scholars insisted that if she had continued to hold the reins of the world, the Demon King would have already departed from the realm of the living.

Powerfully, powerfully, she pressed forward.

And that power brought forth the unification of the entire world.

However, overwhelming power gave birth to fear.

It was an era during which people were not as weak as they are now. At a time when it was still possible to oppose Ruphas, a group of heroes gathered their courage and stood in defiance. The people began to rise up in opposition to the supreme ruler.

I dare say that this was the first time since the dawn of history that mankind was so unified. Even as the dictator they stood against, only she was able to achieve a feat of this scale.

Tied together by bonds of steel, the heroes penetrated the Overlord's defenses.

Having finished off the 12 generals under her command, they were finally able to drag Ruphas out to the battlefield.

The battle spanned over one day and one night.

The overwhelming pressure that Ruphas exerted forced the weak to their knees, crushing the wills of 7 million of the 8 million warriors who stood to confront her.



Slashing, stabbing, and crushing. Ruphas fought at the border between life and death while taking on a multitude of heroes at once. With cuts and burns covering her body, she finally landed a fatal blow against the heroes' forces.

However, the heroes stood back up.

And harboring the power of hope, they set their sights on victory again.

What followed was an all-out attack from the heroes.

Even Ruphas Mafahl would not be able to get out of this predicament unharmed.

But even so, she smiled. And with a pleasant smile spread across her face, she shouted.

"Magnificent! Magnificent, my heroes! You have done well to surpass my abilities! I express my deepest respect for your unyielding courage and overwhelming strength! However, you must not forget the darkness that still remains in this world. This party may stand a chance against that Demon King, but in the event that you lose that battle, the world will be engulfed in even more darkness than it is in now. Whether your future holds hope or misfortune, I will ascertain with my own eyes from the darkest depths of hell! Kuhahahahaha... haaahahahahahaha!"

Thus, the era of Ruphas Mafahl's rule came to an end. The already overthrown ruler was then sealed into a separate dimension, never to set a foot in this world again. Supposedly.

Then how exactly do I explain this? How am I supposed to explain the black winged girl standing right before their eyes?

"So, how long are you going to make me wait? You—you didn't explain the current situation to me, did you?"

The pitiful figure of the king's advisor sat facing Ruphas in the royal hall. As a young elf who succumbed to the overpowering pressure expelled by the Supreme Ruler during the battle that took place 200 years ago, the advisor pondered to himself.

When attempting to summon a hero, did divine punishment rain down instead?

Ah, but the benevolent Goddess of Genesis Alovenas would never...

Reviving the Overlord in an attempt to summon heroes was a bit too...

Without any regard to the advisor's mental distress, Ruphas crossed her arms and thought.

*These wings are going to be a real nuisance when trying to sit down.*



It took several minutes to successfully prompt the beautiful long-eared man to begin speaking.

At certain intervals, he would quickly glance at me and then immediately avert his eyes and tremble in fear. Somehow, little by little, he confirmed my approval and finally decided to speak. I have summarized the contents into these three main points.

After the span of two hundred years, the Demon King remained undefeated.

Ah, I know! Let's summon a hero using the X-gate system.

Somehow, the last boss appeared instead of the hero... ←here we are.

...so short. For this to take ten minutes to explain... am I really that scary? I had a slight impression that this was inside of the game. On the other hand, I wonder how much Midgard has changed over 200 years. I'm actually feeling a bit excited about this predicament. I have an optimistic personality to begin with, so as long as I can enjoy myself, minor setbacks won't bother me at all. I am able to walk the splendid world of X-gate online in the body of the character I poured my heart into making. To online game addicts, this is already the highest form of reward.

Ah, one thing. The name "X-gate online" was derived from X-gate magic, which played a major role in the original game's storyline. Dating back to before the game was made into an MMO, the protagonist was an average high schooler. The student was summoned through the X-gate, and until he was able to defeat the Demon King, he was to remain that world. Well, as an MMO, the only thing that remained of this backstory was the name and the bare existence of the magic.

Come to think of it, don't heroes appear around year 3000 of the Midgard calendar? Isn't that right now? I don't know if any heroes from a different world will appear, but if I ever get the chance to meet them, I'll definitely try to get their autograph... yeah.

On that note, I should probably consider my next course of actions.

The elf advisor and the king have been trembling in that corner for some time now.

First of all, I should demonstrate my harmlessness by leaving as soon as possible.

"...I see. I understand now. So, the Demon King is still going strong. Isn't he a tenacious

one?"

Because it was mainly my fault he went from being the Demon King to being called the Demon King (LOL), I'm rather relieved that he's still in good health. Then, when they attempted to summon a hero, I popped out of the gacha instead. So how do I say this... sorry, I guess? I might have just ruined the hero's debut into the story.

"Ah, do not fret. At this point in time, I no longer intend to take any drastic actions against this world. A body which already tasted defeat is a body that's stopped dreaming... it is too late for me to try to achieve something."

"Ca—Can we believe those words?"

"Definitely. Although I was defeated, a battle of that scale has left me satisfied. While I am a bit disgruntled that the individuals that overthrew me were unable to defeat the Demon King... well, it's fine. More importantly, I would like to travel this world and admire it from afar."

I'll leave dealing with the Demon King to the heroes for the time being. Instead of taking up some meddlesome quest, I would rather explore the world of Midgard. I want to journey across it on my own two feet and see it with my own two eyes. In all honesty, it's taking all of my willpower just to refrain from taking off in excitement.

"A king without any followers and an abandoned throne. Insisting on a monarchy now would be comical, wouldn't it? The Overlord Ruphas is no longer of this world. I am little more than a girl with shattered dreams."

I don't feel like going as far to name myself the Supreme Ruler in this world as well. That's the direct path to earning a wanted poster. I simply want to lead a carefree lifestyle, enjoying life to its fullest potential here. And I'll ponder about how to return to my world while I'm at it.

"Therefore, there is no need for you to panic. Just forget about me and keep summoning heroes or something."

I'll have a mental breakdown if I remain here any longer.  
I stood up from my seat and pushed open the nearby window.  
It was a wonder how I knew how to move the wings that I only just received.  
But somehow, my body understood the fundamentals of flight.



From a scientific perspective, a pair of wings cannot support the human body weight in the air. However, my instincts had flashed me the green light anyways.

“Well then, I will be leaving. If fate will have it, I’m sure we’ll meet again.”

“Wa—wait!”

Ignoring the voice calling out to me, I beat my wings.

And with a push of my legs, my magnificent form took to the skies.

In the blink of an eye, I separated from the ground and the castle shrunk to the size of a grain of sand.

Woah...

Flying... I’m flying!

Traversing the skies and piercing the heavens!

I wonder how I can express these feelings in words.

Freedom—exactly, it’s freedom.

The delight from removing the shackles of gravity.

Feet not touching the ground, I escaped to the boundless world above the clouds.

Spinning, soaring, and gliding—I flew to my heart’s desires!

“Fu, fufu..... hahahahaha!”

From above the clouds, I swooped dangerously close to the ground. And just before coming into contact, I ascended back into the skies, where you could see the land stretching infinitely into the horizon. Right here, right now, these vast skies belong to me and only me. There were no crowds nor traffic to get in the way. I could go anywhere humanly possible.

“Fufu... it feels good to fly through the sky like this. Now then, where shall we head first?”

With so many choices, I was barraged with indecision. Well, first of all, this country isn’t an option. On the chance that the elf advisor or king ordered their citizens to capture me on sight, it would be a real pain in the ass. I want to travel this world in leisure after all.

“...hm? Wait, isn’t that... I see, so it still remains.”

Troubled, “that” rose into my field of vision.  
It was an obsidian black tower that pierced the skies.  
As if challenging the heavens, the building stood boldly against the vastness of the sky.  
There is no way I would ever forget its dauntless appearance.  
It was the symbol of our influence that we built together after all.

The skyscraper “Mafahl”.  
My... no, the base that we erected together.

“I guess the first destination has already been decided, huh?”

I redirected my course of flight, flapping my wings.  
Estimating the distance to the tower was difficult because it was visible from almost anywhere on the map. It was probably a fairly long distance to cover, but with my current abilities, it posed no problem. I had wings capable of carrying me to the heavens after all.

“Hup!”

I flew towards the tower with all of my might, achieving speeds surpassing that of a bullet train. The landscape blurred by at tremendous speeds and the wind pressed at my cheeks. With flawless vision, I sighted birds in the way, but with a twist of my body, they were effortlessly evaded.

Ah, this is so satisfying.  
My heart feels light and carefree.  
I never knew something as simple as flying would be able to bring such freedom and satisfaction!





However, everything eventually comes to an end.

Just minutes after taking off, I came to an abrupt stop. The air quivered, and violent winds accompanied my arrival.

This time, I ascended.

Far above the clouds, I set my eyes on the summit of the tower, where only a select few could reach. According to the myth, when Icarus drew too close to the sun, his wax wings dissolved and he fell to his demise. But the quality of my wings are not to be compared to simple wax. Just sunlight would never be enough to damage them. Many thousands of meters above ground, I made my way to the only entrance.

There were two ways of entering the building. The first was to enter from high altitude. The second was to open the gates from the inside. For the first time, I realize how impractical this is.

While recalling these memories, I stepped into the tower and headed towards the room reserved for the guild master.

# Chapter 3

## The Wild Last Boss Finds A Subordinate

Nations in “X-gate online”—basically players with influence—were allowed to construct a stronghold for their guild. Although the most popular choice was a castle, it could take on any appearance imaginable. A rare few took on the shape of shrines and temples, and one particular stronghold was even modeled after a cafe. While it’s hard to imagine a cafe serving as the heart of a nation, it was something made possible within the game. From the innumerable options, the design I chose was a tower. In no time, I was fully exploiting the customization options.

The tower was redesigned every time our influence expanded. By borrowing the minds of players who had a better eye for art, the “Tower of Mafahl” eventually became one of the most awe-inspiring structures of the game.

“...though it’s abandoned... it’s still so... breathtaking.”

But as you would expect, after a period of two hundred years, the inside of the tower became layered in dust. Nevertheless, the beautiful designs that decorated the skyscraper’s interior still peeked out from under the grime. As I walked straight ahead, a cracked, yet impressive crimson throne came into view.

The shattered windows were once beautiful stained glass.

Poking a finger into a crack that ran along the wall, I recall the joyful memories made in this room.

Everyone was here with me.

Here, we discussed how we would increase our influence. This was the site where we made an oath as guild members and considered our future expeditions.

We made merry deep into the night, drowning ourselves in wine...

...wait a second, why do I recall these memories as if I was there in person? Ruphas was the one who drank wine—not me. I simply watched from a computer screen, right? What is there to reminisce about in the first place? It was only days ago that I split my territory into two parts. It’s far too soon to get nostalgic about anything.

Shit, are these Ruphas’ memories?

I’m going to end up mistaking the game for reality if this continues.

I'm having a hard time distinguishing between the two even now.  
Besides—

“How strange. This should be my first time seeing this in person, but it somehow feels so nostalgic. I feel a sense of security by just being here.”

Nostalgia wells up in my chest.

It was as if I had returned home after a journey around the world.

A mysterious feeling.

Am I going crazy?

Or is my consciousness really merging with Ruphas'?

It's impossible to know right now.

“...hm?”

My voice slipped out in surprise. Here, where none other than myself was permitted entry, a sound resounded through the room.

I turned towards the sound. There, a young girl I didn't recognize stood before me.

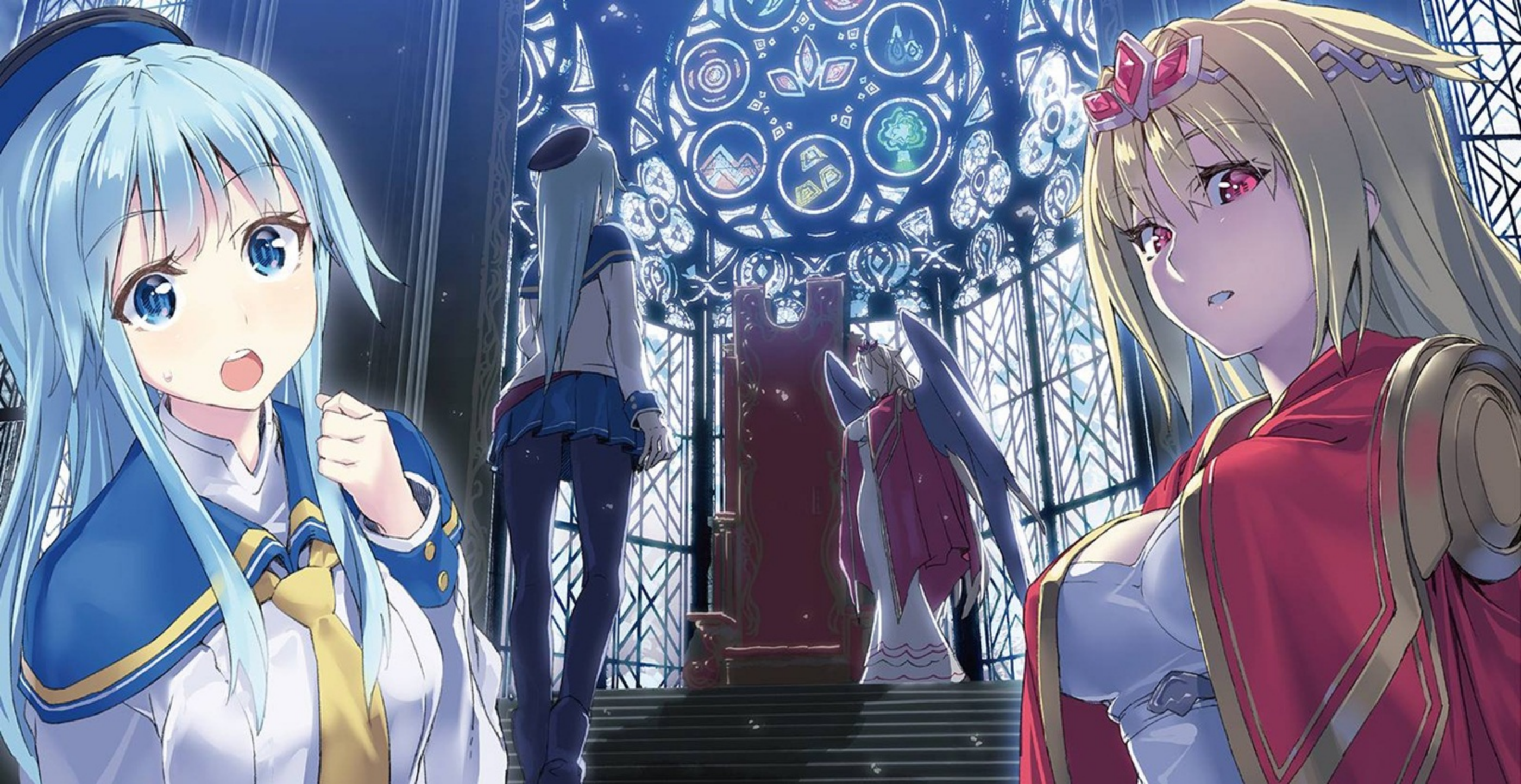
She possessed pale blue hair the color of the sea complimented by marine blue eyes. Her simple, white clothing wrapped lightly around her snow white skin. Moreover, her facial features were stunning.

...an unfamiliar face.

At the very least, she wasn't among guild members I gave permission to step foot on the highest floor of the tower. Who is she? And why is she here?

“—Ruphas-sama! Aren't you Ruphas Mafahl-sama?”







Calling out my name, she scuttled over and gripped my hands tightly with her own. Just the sincere smile plastered across her face was enough to express just how blessed she thought she was to witness my return. Sadly, I don't recognize her at all.

"Who... are you?"

"Ho-How cruel! Have you already forgotten me? Forgotten about Dina, your most loyal advisor? I've been waiting 200 years in this tower for your return, you know!?"

Dina? Advisor?

What is this girl saying?

In place of an advisor, I had my guild members. Even then, none of them were named Dina. I never had an advisor, not to even mention a young girl named Dina...

.....

—no, she was there.

That's right, I remember now.

When I first built the stronghold, I decorated the tower with various ornaments. Among them, I faintly recall positioning an NPC, which paced aimlessly about the chamber. In an empty hall, Dina helped add depth to the background.

Shortly after giving it a name and a backstory, I had forgotten all about her. She was little more than an animated ornament. The next thing I knew, she became just another part of the background.

And that girl, out of her own free will, chose to spend 200 years of her life waiting for my return?

Regardless of whether I remembered her or not?

She had remained faithful to the role I assigned her and continued to stay here, alone?

"Ah, I see... I remember now. Forgive me, Dina. To forget an existence as important as yours... something must be wrong with me."

This is not a game.

It struck me how naive my attitude towards this world had been up until now.

If I continued to treat this world as a game, I could ruin the lives of thousands.

Forgetting an NPC in a game would just result in a couple seconds of confusion.

However, doing the same to a person with genuine emotions is an unforgivable insult

to their existence.

“I commend you for your services. You have done well to protect this place during my absence, Dina.”

“I—I am unworthy of such praise!”

I will never again think of her as an “ornament in the shape of a human”, but instead as another individual.

“Um, Ruphas-sama. How were you able to return to this world?”

“Ah. It seems a nation to the west was attempting to summon a hero, but they failed and pulled me back from the subspace. I owe it to their recklessness that I am able to be here right now.”

“Levatin... should be the country that lies west from here. They’ve shown signs of preparing to summon heroes before. So that’s what it was...”

According to Dina, they’ve been working hard towards that goal for a while now.  
Thank you so much for your efforts.  
And—how do I say this—forgive me. For your considerable hardships.

“As you can see, I am quite ignorant of the ways of the world in this day and age. I’ve heard that the Demon King is still in good health, though.”

“That’s right! Immediately after those obnoxious heroes defeated you, the heroes fell apart, the country became divided, and they’ve been beaten to a pulp by the Demon King ever since! How sloppy!”

Ah, yeah. Sorry, Dina. I guess disperse of influence went according to our plan. Rather, the final battle was just staged to release our influence...  
The collapse of Ruphas Mafahl’s rule would signal the dawn of a new era. Various players would begin to expand their influence, aiming to become the new successor to the world.

And the Demon King should have been... the official last boss.  
Unlike me, there were definite merits in defeating him. The Demon King had a hundred percent chance of dropping a rare item.  
However, countries would never form an alliance to defeat it.



Rather, it would be troubling if an opposing nation defeated the Demon King. In addition, incompetent allies would only drag you down.

But that reasoning only stands if this was still a game.

Which in this case, I haven't a single clue why humanity would fall apart against the Demon King.

In the first place, to what degree was the game reflected in this world?

Would an in-game fight with the Demon King influence its history?

Or do the events of this world occur independently of the game?

...the more I think about it, the more disoriented I become. Just the fact that a game is reflected in this separate reality is already unusual in itself.

Just how is this world related to "X-gate online"?

"Ruphas-sama?"

"Ah, excuse me. I was lost in thought. Dina, would you do me the favor of teaching me about the world I left?"

"Yes, of course! If that will be of use to Ruphas-sama, then gladly!"

With a charming smile spread across her face, Dina replied without the slightest hint of hesitation

Wha—what a good girl... She really puts my heart at ease.

Well, that's one thing off my checklist. I've found something to protect.

It's simple. Cute girls are precious assets of any world.

As a man, it's natural to want to protect them.

"...first, about the heroes that defeated you. Afterwards, each of the seven heroes decided to establish their own nations. Four of them have passed away due to old age, but the other three are still alive today."

Those seven heroes undoubtedly refer to the seven players that stood alongside me as the top ranked players in the game. Each of them specialized in a different character class, and we conquered countless dungeons as a party. In other words, they were my former guild members.

...I wonder how they're all doing.

Could those heroes be players like me?

Or are they completely unrelated?

Of course, I would hope for the former, but I can't say anything for sure until I meet them in person. For now, let's make meeting those three a goal while traveling this world.

"The Twelve Heavenly Stars are all in good health. However, I only know the whereabouts of six of them. Among those six, two have joined the Demon King to take revenge on the humans you were defeated by."

The Twelve Heavenly Stars.

They were what you would call "familiar".

The class I had chose had the ability to tame monsters and possessed an inherent skill that gave you a chance of turning a defeated opponent into an ally.

To monster tamers that have little to no offensive power, it wouldn't be an overstatement to say their ability to reel in a strong monster is a matter of life and death.

I... lucked out.

A boss monster that only appeared during an event and a rare monster that almost never made its appearance. Having tamed these monstrosities of familiars, I proceeded to put 12 of the most powerful monsters under Ruphas' jurisdiction as her 12 generals. Then, I bestowed upon them the embarrassing title of the Twelve Heavenly Stars.

I thought it would be cool for a ruler to have something like the Four Heavenly Kings under his command. You can tell I was at the peak of puberty.

"Joined the Demon King, huh... Goodness. Though I'm fully aware that my weakness is to blame for their actions, it's still a pathetic way to behave. I will need to quickly scold them."

Let's add one more objective to our travels.

I will collect the Twelve Heavenly Stars and take the responsibility to subdue them. Well, in reality, the thought that the familiars I raised were causing trouble for others made my stomach hurt.

I'll stop them with brute force if I have to.

"Hmph... Dina, could you mark the current locations of the 3 remaining heroes and The Twelve Heavenly Stars on a map?"

"Yes, certainly."

First, I must find out if the three heroes are players like me.

Then, if the Twelve Heavenly Stars are acting stupid, I will stop and recover them.

...Ah, right. We're also going to need a source of money. For a penniless individual like me, this is top priority. I will need to look for a way to acquire funds for our travels.

"I've finished, Ruphas-sama. I've marked everything on this map."

"Thank you."

Accepting the map from Dina, I scanned over the contents.

As for the heroes, the closest one is positioned at a country called Suvell, which is about 1,400 kilometers north from our current location.

The elf hero has taken up residence here.

Furthermore, "The Ram", Aries, is preparing for the invasion of Suvell in a castle at the foot of the volcano nearby.

...what in hell does this sheep think it's doing?

Anyways, this should be our first destination.

I'm going to have to stop that sheep before a hole opens up in my stomach.

Good grief, what a pain in the ass.

However, I would be lying if I said I wasn't excited.

Now then, let's start with looking for a job.

---

※Some kind of explanation

- Magical power in this world

In the world of Midgard, Magical power and Holy power are polar opposite existences. Magical power is closely tied to demons, so it aims to hurt or curse. On the other hand, the holy attribute has a strong association to the heavens, and it focuses more on healing and support.

In simpler terms Magic = Black magic, Holy power = White magic

*(TN: In Japanese, the word for magic = 魔力. The first character, 魔 also means 'has to do with hell'. So for example, 魔界 means "hell", or "the world of spirits".)*

# Chapter 4

## The Old Man Unleashes Golem

The city of Yударil is one of trade and commerce. It lies just east of the country of Levatin and does not belong to any nation. Positioned between almost every major country, it's a bustling city where a large variety of merchants and travelers come to. Naturally, that includes adventurers as well. In fact, back when this was a game, this was where new players began their adventure.

Despite the 200 years that have elapsed, Yударil remained lively as ever. I felt relieved to see that even a small part of the world remained as I had known it.

"...Dina, it's difficult to move."

"Please put up with it for now. You'd be recognized in an instant after all. You don't want to attract any unwanted attention, do you?"

While wandering this charming city, I hid my entire body under my overcoat, looking as suspicious as one could get. As per Dina's instruction, my wings were wrapped tightly around my body and an overcoat was forced over them. Moreover, the crimson overcoat I wore had a convenient hood attached to the back. Although this is definitely enough to hide my identity, I think it's making me stand out anyways. And I can't really move my arms in this outfit. What's this? Some new kind of sex play?

"Now then, Ruphas-sama. First, acquiring funds for our travels is probably our highest hurdle. Anyone would recognize you at a glance, so it's extremely hard to find a suitable job, you see? There aren't many people out there willing to hire the black-winged overlord after all."

"...but those are the events of 200 years ago. In an age without pictures, I doubt anyone would be able to recognize me."

"Naive. That's naive, Ruphas-sama. This trading city is where people of every corner of the world gather, you know? And races with long life spans like elves aren't exceptions. They may still remember you clearly."



Hearing out Dina's explanation, I nodded in understanding. Come to think of it, those races exist in this alternate universe. I myself am a member of one of those long-lived races. To begin with, Flugels are rumored to be descendants of angels. And regardless of whether or not that's true, they boast an average lifespan of a ridiculous 1,500 years. That's why I'm able to retain my young appearance even after 200 years of imprisonment.

By the way, Ruphas used to be 275 years old, so I guess she's 475 years old now. In human years, she would be 14 when she was sealed and around 24 as of now... my outward appearance is of a 15 to 17-year-old girl, though.

"Especially those black wings! Even if they didn't recognize you, your wings stand out too much. For Flugels, those are the wings of taboo after all."

"They're normally black, aren't they? I bet you I'm just a different variety of flugel."

As I've mentioned before, flugels are the descendants of angels.

They themselves believe the same and take pride in their untainted, pure white wings. They went as far as to insist that those wings were the proof of a flugel, and that their sexual appeal was neither decided by their faces nor their bodies, but rather their wings. Apparently, a male would flaunt his wings at a female to display his affection. To put things bluntly, whether you're unattractive, obese, pimpled, stink, or wear anime print T-shirts, as long as your wings remain pure white, you're some pretty hot stuff.

On the contrary, no matter how refined your physical appearance is, if your wings are tainted, you'll never be attractive.

In this aspect, my jet black wings are completely out of question. They far surpass the jurisdiction of beauty and ugliness. At this rate, I'd only be recognized as a monster.

In human terms... let's see. It's like having green skin, no eyebrows and hair sprouting from the middle of my forehead instead of my scalp. Forget about beauty—I wouldn't even be acknowledged as another flugel.

Of course, I was fully aware of this backstory and had chosen these black wings with this knowledge at hand. The reason was extremely simple. "Aren't wings of taboo the coolest?"

Needless to say, many other players thought the same, and jet black wings weren't so

uncommon. Rather, more eccentric designs included golden wings, gradients, and even players that took the liberty to pick out a different color for every other feather. Trying to accept that I stood out while knowing this is... beyond difficult. If I stand out, then what about those crazy rainbow-winged flugels?

“There’s nothing normal about it! Please! Be a bit more self-aware!”

“Okay, I got it, I got it. Stop shouting already.”

Having made Dina mad, I shrugged my shoulders.

Good grief. So this world differs enough from the game that I can’t put my wings on display, huh. How inconvenient.

“Seriously... back to my point. Despite your reputation, there’s one line of work that pretty much anyone could take up.”

“Ah, adventurers—in other words, people who put their lives on the line to earn a living.”

“Exactly. Reputation and social status are unnecessary. Anyone with a mind and body can do it.”

Those who put their lives on the line to earn a living—Adventurers.

It’s an occupation that requires little more than a bit of determination to take on.

Money and social status are irrelevant. Anyone can accept requests regardless of whether they’re a slave or a criminal. In exchange, your safety isn’t guaranteed. Neither the agency nor the client is held accountable if you were to lose an arm or your life while completing a request.

In addition, you sink to the bottom of the social hierarchy. The vagrants and the jobless with no place to stay. Individuals constantly troubled over where they’ll find their next meals. They’re the kind of people who, in their last moments, dream of drowning in gold —then die along the roadside. That’s what it means to be an adventurer.

Whereas in the game, because you could revive limitlessly, this reality remained nothing more than a dark backstory. Rather, the majority of players farmed money and experience as adventurers and then proceeded through the rest of the game. So the number of adventurers averaged from a couple thousand to hundreds of thousands of players at a time. So what about the social hierarchy?... all it really amounted to is some verbal abuse from NPC’s, so it wasn’t that big of a deal.

However, this is reality. Death really is the end of the line, and I'm sure harsh acts of discrimination omitted from the game make their appearance here.

...am I going to be alright? This is Ruphas Mafahl's body, so death is highly improbable. But will I be able to stand the sight of blood? Can I really do this dirty work when I can barely stand the sight of a pigeon getting run over by a car? To be honest, I'm anxious.

"We have arrived. This way please."

In response Dina's invitation, I entered the building after her. It was a slightly grimy tavern made out of wood. The first floor was lined with several tables like a cafeteria, and many thug-like figures could be seen sitting throughout. The moment we step foot into the building, several hungry gazes fixed upon Dina. However, with a suspicious individual (me) standing beside her, none of them had the nerve to approach.

"Yeah, this is it. This shitty atmosphere sure is nostalgic."

"Now that you mention it, you were also an adventurer before establishing your own nation, weren't you?"

—hm? Didn't I just say something a bit out of place? Nostalgic... no, this really does take me back. As I said, It's common knowledge for the majority of novice players to work their way up as adventurers. I was no exception and had completed a great number of requests during my time as one. However..."I" have never taken single a step into a tavern such as this one. And yet, I feel nostalgic. It seems that "I" might be merging with "Ruphas" after all...

"Welcome. Is there something you would like to order? Or would you like to stay for the night?"

"We would like to accept a request."

"...miss, are you alright?"

The brusque, bald bar-owner shot a dubious look at Dina. At a glance, Dina seemed unsuited for battle with her slender body and delicate atmosphere. Indeed, if I was told such a girl was an adventurer, I would also question her sanity. Dina put on a charming smile in response to the addled shopkeeper.

"Oh, I won't be the one accepting the request."

“Oho, so the red guy over there, huh... Alright, I’d like you to step into the back of the shop for a second. I’d like to take a look at your abilities.”

An adventurer is someone who could drop dead at any moment. However, having one die before they could fulfill the request would put a hole in an agency’s reputation. If rumor went around that “no decent adventurers pick up their requests at that agency”, their business would plunge after all. That’s why the agency must confirm the extents of their employees’ abilities... is what I’ve grasped from what Dina whispered into my ear.

I stepped behind the shop as instructed, where the bar-owner stood beside several identical stone statues. Each had a scruffy beard and a friendly smile. If I’m not mistaken, these are stone golems produced by an alchemist.

Alchemists consume tools to create a wide variety of devices, and golems are just one example. As combat-oriented NPC’s, golems are reassuring companions for many solo players. Their strength varies upon the raw materials and the skill level of the creator, but they rarely differ in level or status. Also, golems can only be revived by their creator, so their remains hold little to no value. In addition, once a golem decides on a target, it continues to fight regardless of whether you like it or not. Sure, they’re convenient, but there aren’t many opportunities for low-level players to use them. I also remember preparing a fair number of golems to strengthen my defenses before the decisive battle against the heroes. However, they were little more than hindrances to high-level players.

“I’m going to have you fight these golems in a moment. The number of golems defeated and how efficiently you work will be taken into account of your evaluation.”

“Understood.”

To express my willingness, I took a step forward. The overcoat was confining, making my movements slightly awkward. To be honest, this is quite the handicap, but... well, I should be fine. Worst case scenario, I’ll deal with them with [coercion].

“Ready?”

“I’m ready when you are.”

“Great. Then let’s get this started.”

With this, the golems' eyes lit up with life. Without a moment's delay, I invoked a ranger skill, [Observing Eye]. It's a convenient ability that displays the level, remaining HP, and even the stats of an opponent if the user is skilled enough. Thus, the target's abilities were displayed as shown below.

### 【Stone Golem】

Level 5

Race: artificial life-form

HP: 68

SP: 0

STR (strength): 73

DEX (dexterity): 36

VIT (vitality): 80

INT (intelligence): 5

AGI (agility): 27

MND (willpower): 5

LUK (fortune): 40

Hm. As you can see, they're small fry. These are opponents that can be challenged within thirty minutes of playing the game. Now if you tagged along with a more experienced party, a single fight with a higher level opponent could supply you with enough experience. All things considered, it seems that these golems were made with the sole purpose of measuring your capabilities in mind. Rather, it would be for the best if you gave up on becoming an adventurer if you were to lose to them.

I should probably also check my own stats while I'm at it. Honestly though, the gap in power is so large that I'm not sure how much I should hold back.

### 【Ruphas Mafahl】

Level 1000

Race: Flugel

Class Levels

Warrior: 100

Swordmaster: 100

Grappler: 100

Champion: 100

Monster Tamer: 100



Alchemist: 100

Ranger: 100

Strider: 100

Acolyte: 100

Priest: 50

Esper: 50

HP: 335000

SP: 17430

STR (strength): 9200

DEX (dexterity): 8750

VIT (vitality): 10300

INT (intelligence): 8300

AGI (agility): 10778

MND (willpower): 9550

LUK (fortune): 9280

Equipment

Head: —

Right Hand: —

Left Hand: —

Torso: Dress of Heaven's Empress

- Abnormal Status Nullity

- Automatic HP recovery

Shoes: Boots of Swiftness

- Increased Movement Speed

Other: Overcoat of the Seven Luminaries

- 50% Damage Reduction of all Attributes

This is just bullying the weak at this point. On that note, you're not just seeing things if my statistics seem a bit abnormal. Although the level cap was 1000, there are no upper limits for character stats. This means you can continue raising your stats even after hitting the level cap.

Despite status-enhancing items being notably rare, they weren't impossible to obtain. In fact, because HP enhancements were so easy to acquire, my health stats skyrocketed as a result.

On a side note, the average flugel has around 70,000 HP once they reach the level cap

of 1000. That might give you a glimpse of what I had to go through to raise my HP to this degree.

As one would expect, I was unable to achieve statistics comparable to those of the final boss characters of the game, but I'm confident my stats outstripped plenty of other boss monsters. My alias as the "wild last boss" was by no means a groundless assumption.

While we're on the subject, I'll go a bit further into detail about "Levels" and "Class Levels". There's nothing special about levels. In RPG's, it's an obvious expression of the strength and combat experience that accumulates over time. This number caps at 1000 and there's not much you can do to overturn it. Even if you were locked in combat with several boss characters, it remains the one unbendable rule of X-gate.

Next, the "class level".

These indicate the level of each character class you possess and caps at 100.

This number increases in sync with normal character levels and influences how your abilities develop, so they play a large role in character growth.

For instance, if you wanted to be a vanguard but have been acting as a support for too long, you might find that your character stats are unsuited for swapping positions.

This is where the game leans toward to being a TRPG.

Once a class level is maxed out, the game will ask you to perform a class change. Then, unless a new class is chosen, no experience will be gained no matter what kind of monsters you face off.

There are two methods of resolving this issue. The first is to act accordingly and alternate classes. Then, upon reaching level 1000, you will have accomplished a character that holds mastery over 10 different classes. However, this doesn't mean you can't switch classes before mastering the previous one. For example, I only raised the priest and esper classes to level 50, allowing me to squeeze in 11 classes instead.

The second method makes use of the cash shop.

If you pay the money, the level cap is lifted, and you can continue to raise the class level to up to 200. However, barely any additional skills can be acquired along the line. For example, Swordmaster and Grappler classes would exceed the offensive ability and HP of a vanguard, which is one advantage of the cash shop.

In addition, there are also players who aim to optimize the effectiveness of certain skills that depend on class levels.

I didn't bring any class level past 100. It was the general opinion that class leveling to 200 wasn't a very intelligent choice. Not that really matters now.

Now then, it's finally time for my first taste of battle.

Although there will be no resistance, it's an opportunity sharpen my new pair of fangs.

---

### ✂A bit of explanation

- Humans

The race with the highest population in the world. Their abilities are the most balanced among all seven races. Although they have no particular strengths, they possess no shortcomings either.

Humans are capable of breeding with all members of the 7 races. Any "half-breeds" will always have a human parent. While Elf X Flugel would never produce offspring, Flugel X Human could.

Their inherent skill, [solidarity], grants a slight stat and experience boost when they are accompanied by their comrades.

- Elves

The race of long-eared beauties well rooted in the genre of fantasy.

Blessed with the gift of longevity, the average elf easily lives a thousand years.

Their delicate appearances and poor physical abilities make them poorly suited candidates for vanguards. However, they hold unrivaled expertise over the field of magic.

Their inherent skill, [mental unity], gradually regenerates SP over time.

- Flugels

A race of those who roam freely through the heavens. In addition to their long life spans, they are a well-rounded race with exceptional stats in every field. However, they have no aptitude for offensive magic. That said, their intelligence and SP are superb, so the alchemist and acolyte classes take plenty advantage of their stats.

Their ability to render opponents powerless without dealing damage is also valuable as a monster tamer. Speaking of which, the flugels' racial skill, [coercion], immobilizes weaker hostiles for a random amount of time.

- Beastmen

A race of people adorned with animal traits and reside deep within forests.

They come under two different categories: herbivorous beastmen specialized in speed and carnivorous beastmen specialized in strength. Though they outdo even the Flugel race in terms of close-combat, the same cannot be said for intelligence. And although they can use a certain degree of magic, they're unsuitable supports.

The beastmen's inherent skill, [detection], marks enemy positions on the map

- Vampires

The noble race of nocturnals that demonstrate their true powers at night.

In addition their stats being on par with those of the flugel race, they are also capable of wielding magic. A hidden skill also allows vampires to revive infinitely at night. Furthermore, their inherent skill is a broken ability that enables automatic health regeneration.

In exchange, they have many limitations. Vampires suffer from a drastic stat decrease in daylight. However, this may not bother players who, for some reason or another, can only play at night. They also have very low affinity for the holy attribute and cannot use holy magic. The vampires' inherent skill, [regeneration], allows for automatic health recovery.

- Dwarves

A short race that excels in defense, vitality, and dexterity.

However, the beastmen outdo them in close combat, so it wouldn't be a reason to deliberately choose this race.

Their true value lies in their nimble fingers. It wasn't uncommon for a dwarf to completely devote their time to weapon creation and never step a foot into the battlefield. Their inherent skill, [craftsmanship], doubles the success rate of item creation.

- Hobbits

A race of small-sized humans often referred to as “hobbits”, “halflings”, or “grass runners”. They’re cheerful and nimble little creatures that are well adapted to the ranger class. Hobbit’s don’t boast of the most impressive magic or offensive ability, but they’re the most reliable when it comes to dungeon exploration.

The hobbits’ inherent skill, [locate], multiplies item drop rates by 5.



# Chapter 5

## The Wild Last Boss Accepts A Request

A golem's fist swings through the air. I had steeled myself for any attack, but their sluggish movements are slowly putting me to sleep. So slow—too slow. What is this? Some kind of anime protagonist punch overflowing with hopes, dreams, and the power of friendship? I could run to the grocery, buy an apple, eat it, come back, and still make it back in time to parry the blow. What's with these half-assed movements? Am I being underestimated?

"These are some stiff golems, yeah?"

Voicing my discontent, I jumped lightly over the golem. Then, with a tenth of my full power, I thrust my heel down at the head. The stone statue crumpled like paper, completely losing any resemblance to its original shape.

Fra—fragile. Too fragile. A cardboard box would have won in a competition of durability. The grounds a bit too brittle as well.

"Master. There's no need to hold back, you know? Could you make their movements more natural?"

".....Huh? Uh, what...? Im-impossible... the-the golem was defeated? What just happened?"

"...perhaps, were you... not paying attention just now?"

Once again, I took the golem's speed and strength into consideration. However, the owner's bewildered face tells a different story.

Ah, I see. It's just me. It wasn't because the golems were too slow or too fragile, but because I was too fast and too strong. My concentration on the battlefield was so intense that it distorted my own perception of time.

"I see... that was the extent of their power."

That golem was level 5. That means that the average novice adventurer is also level 5, and that in this world, it is a praiseworthy display of strength. On the contrary, I'm level 1000 and especially confident in terms of speed. As a result, their full speeds appear as sluggish movements from my perspective.

The in-game mechanics also worked similarly. If the difference in agility was too large, the lower level player would never land a blow even if the opponent stood in place. It's also a good representation of my fight with the golem.

"Let's get this over with."

I proceeded to crush the three remaining golems, lightly smashing apart two more with my feet. They give almost no resistance—as if I was slicing butter. I then pulled off a leisurely kick at the final golem, which soon fell to the ground, lifeless.

"...Wha—what in the world are..."



The bar master trailed off in a shaky voice. His eyes were clouded with fear. This is bad. I would rather not draw too much attention as I am now... well, what's done is done. I'll try to bear this in mind next time.

"Ruphas-sama, you're overdoing it! The very standards of fighting are far lower than what they were 200 years ago! You'll give rise to fear if you don't restrain yourself!"

Dina ran over and whispered heatedly.

So now I know that the fighting standards have fallen over time. Shouldn't you tell me that earlier?

"Ah, forgive me, Dina, It seems I might have lost my touch over the span of 200 years. I had misjudged my own capabilities."

"Seriously, try to be a bit more careful next time, okay?"

It seems that even exerting a tenth of my power is excessive. Next time, a forehead flick should be enough to deal with this kind of opponent. Ah, but I can't move my arms, so maybe a wiggle of my toes would suffice.

At any rate, how mysterious. The moment I engaged in combat, the world around me slowed to a crawl. With Ruphas' instincts, I was able to smoothly transition between a normal field of perception into one more suited for battle.

"So, what do you think? I should think it was a flawless performance, though."

"Ye—yeah... that's right, you shouldn't have trouble with any requests. The request board is inside the tavern, so feel free to choose one to your liking."

Having received the owner's approval, Dina and I returned to the bar to seek out the request board. However, after scanning over the available jobs, I found that all of them lacked a certain appeal. Frankly, I would prefer a task with a more generous reward over multiple smaller jobs. I want to get to Suvell as soon as I can. An escort request for a coach traveling from Yudaril to Suvell would be ideal. In that case, I would be able to earn some pocket money while heading over to Suvell. Although I alone could fly over in an instant, that would mean leaving Dina behind. With a carriage, I can easily bring Dina along with me... is what I initially thought, but—

"There's nothing good here, huh?"

“There isn’t.”

Though there was an escorting request, the carriage was headed for Levatin instead. To say nothing of the fact that Levatin is in the opposite direction of Suvell. Unfortunately, we couldn’t find any requests that fell under my expectations.

“Ah, Ruphas-sama. What do you think of this one?”

“Hm?”

I glanced at the thin sheet that Dina held up to me.

### 【Request • Cat Search】

Difficulty: ☆☆

Reward: 100 eru for every cat found

Our household’s 12 pet cats have run off somewhere.

Please look for them!

“1200 eru at best just for searching for 12 cats! What a bargain!”

“Ah, well, it certainly is.”

1200 eru if the search goes well... it certainly is a bargain.

Eru is the currency of this world and if I’m not mistaken, 1 eru is the equivalent to around 200 Japanese yen (2 USD). Basically, that means completing this job earns us a total of 240,000 yen (2,400 USD). Either the client is quite the cat lover, or they’re wealthy nobles. In any case, they live a lavish lifestyle.

On a side note, although that was the in-game conversion rate, the opposite might hold true in reality. It’s obvious that between game currency and real money, the latter holds more value. In fact, you could obtain 10,000 eru worth of in-game equipment with 500 yen (5 USD). That would make real money more valuable by a long shot.

“Let’s not. I’m not the best at searching. That is a job for a beastman.”

“The—then what about this one?”

【request • orc subjugation】

Difficulty: ☆☆☆☆

Reward: 1500 eru

Orcs have built a nest near the village and have been doing as they please.

Please help.

“Oh? That’s a fairly profitable request there. How strange for no one to accept it.”

I say in approval of the job request held up by Dina. I would have exterminated the orcs even if there was no cash reward. These creatures have a 3 percent drop rate for [orc meat], an HP status-enhancing item, after all.

Orcs—otherwise known as “pork chops”. When this was still a game, they existed solely so players could farm easy experience. Truly an existence worthy of their nickname.

Especially for level capped players who hoped to get ahold of HP-up’s, orc extermination was a daily routine. There were also players who camped at orc spawning locations. For these reasons, they became rare monsters. The average orc’s lifespan was reduced to a measly couple of seconds.

That’s why it was impossible for them to lead a raid on a human village. They were butchered and looted the second they were born, let alone gathering to form a group. Orcs were mobs so pitiful that you start to sympathize with lines of code. For those orcs to move, gather, and attack people... this is a deeply moving moment for me.

“It’s because there’s no profit.”

“What? Orc hunting is the embodiment of profit.”

“That might hold true for Ruphas-sama, but the times have changed. Nowadays, a single orc can match the strength of an experienced warrior. The extermination of a nest would be a job for the knight order. And even then, there are plenty of casualties. No one is willing to put their life on the line for a meager 1500 eru.”



“So the times change... back then, adventurers would line up to accept such a request. Not to mention quest rewards would never sink so low. I remember a similar request that paid 15,000 eru.”

The differences between game and reality drew a sigh from my lips. Orc hunting is nothing but a worthless burden to the denizens of this world. However, players from the game would be living the dream to receive a reward for killing orcs. It's like being paid to play games. You can't help but think it's too good to be true.

“So... it's fine if I raze the nest to the ground, right?”

“Of course.”

“Alright. Then let's accept this request. This will be our ticket to secure food and money before we embark on our journey.”

“Yaaaay, this time the orcs are going extinct for sure. Though it was my idea, I think I'm feeling a bit sorry for them now,”

This is a chance to earn money, obtain meat, and raise my HP simultaneously. If I let such an opportunity slip from my grasp, then I'm unqualified as a competitive player. With the written request in hand, I told the bar owner of my plans and left the tavern behind.



“By the way, Dina.”

“Yes?”

The village specified in the request is located half a day away on foot. While heading our way towards the destination, I decided to pass time by asking Dina some questions. There are all kinds of differences between this world and my knowledge of the game. 200 years is by no means a short period of time after all.

“You told me that the standards of combat have dropped from 200 years ago. I'd like to hear about that in a bit more detail.”

200 years ago—when this was a game, I was undoubtedly the strongest player. Listed at the top of all player rankings, I'm confident that there wasn't a single opponent that

could overpower me. However, in no way did that mean I was unrivaled in strength. Believe it or not, there was no lack of players that could challenge my authority.

The game had 8 million active players in total... and around 20 percent of them achieved level capped characters, which is the bottom line for being a competitive player. Naturally, it'll take a bit of effort to reach, but it's definitely not something a little perseverance can't accomplish. Then again, that alone isn't enough to be recognized as a top-ranking player. The real challenge comes after: efficiently collecting status-enhancing items after becoming unable to level. Then, only a small portion of the retards who ruin their health playing the game are listed as top-ranking players.

Now that I think of it... the usage of status-enhancing items doesn't seem to be a common practice in this world. That would mean your growth would come to a halt at the level cap. But even then, that's no reason for standards to drop *this* far.

The next few words that came out of Dina's mouth blew my mind.

"Uuum, let's see... the country you mentioned earlier, Levatin, is also widely known as the "Nation of Swords" and... there's a sword saint famed as the greatest swordsman on the planet... he should be somewhere around level 120."

".....120?"

"Yes, 120."

I doubted my own ears. Level 120? The greatest swordsman on the planet is level 120!? What's with this absurdly low number? I'm surprised he can call himself a sword saint. He sounds like a cocky beginner who decided to honor himself with a "second name" because he happened to reach level 100. At least reach level 1000 before making a fool out of yourself.

"You must be joking. There's a limit to how low it can be, you know?"

"You see, Ruphas-sama. The strange ones were the people from that generation. Please think about it. You only have one life. The kind of monsters able to reach level 1000 without losing their lives usually don't exist. Not to mention that the only way to get there is by fighting day after day like a madman. To train without rest—it's barely enough to call it an act of madness... It was the heroes of that age who were actually crazy."

I feel disoriented. But I get it.

Indeed, level 1000 was only achievable because it was a game.

You could simply resurrect after death. There were no consequences.

It was possible *because* it was a game... but can we really say the same for reality?

To be hunting monsters all day, every day, and live through that nightmare for over a year. How many people on the planet can achieve such a feat? And how many of those individuals still retain their sanity?

With that in mind, even level 120 is an incredible accomplishment. The level of a lunatic on the verge of obsession.

I was the one who was irregular.

“I see... Indeed, it is considerably different from the world I knew.”

I am a lunatic and a monster in this world.

Staring straight into the eyes of reality, an empty feeling enveloped my chest.

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### 【Unnecessary Explanation】

- Changing Your Occupation in X-gate Online

Status in X-gate online relies heavily on “levels” and “class levels”, How stats develop depends on the equipped class at the time of leveling.

The class level caps at 100, but class changes before cost experience, What a heartbreaking way to say goodbye to your former class.

✂However, these limitations can be lifted through the cash shop. This way, it’s possible to extend the maximum class level to 200. This is where the developers bare their hungry jaws for the sweet taste of your hard earned money.

# Chapter 6

## A Wild Orc Appeared

Airou village. It's a small village half a day away from the trade city of Yударил. With no distinctive products, it's a reserved community. At least that's what I've heard from Dina.

Having escaped from the shade of the forest, a town of negligible size rose into view. Several small, wooden houses stood in lines, and bountiful fields stretched over the land—a nice change in atmosphere.

"The specified address of our client should be... ah, that large building over there."

Lifting her eyes from the request paper, Dina pointed to a particularly large building. Naturally, it wasn't as "large" as a residence in the city, but rather "large" in comparison to the other homes of the village. It's most likely the village chief's residence. Arriving at the doorstep, Dina knocked lightly on the door.

"Excuse meeee, we're here to complete a request. Is the mayor home?"

Dina told me to leave all of the negotiations and planning to her, so I'm just here for show. You see, my arrogant tone would only irritate our employer.

"Oho, I've kept you waiting. Now then, please come inside."

The person who appeared in the doorway was a graying senior. For a moment, his expression warped with suspicion as he glanced over me. However, he guided us in without a word.

The room's interior was clearly worn down. Evidence of hasty repairs lined the walls and the wooden flooring creaked with each step. The fact that the mayor's home was in such a state clearly told of the village's predicament.

"By all means, take a seat."

Beckoning us to sit, the man rested on a shaky chair. It looked like it could collapse at

any moment, but somehow, it supported his weight.

“Well, let’s get down to business at once. We are to destroy the orc nest nearby the village. Is this correct?”

“Yes. But I haven’t gone as far to request it’s destruction. As long as you’re able to drive the orcs out of the area, I will gladly pay the reward. At this rate, the orcs will continue to prey on the villagers... the young women abducted, the men killed, and our children murdered for sport... With most of our crops stolen, we’ve been driven to a corner. Please, rain judgment upon those horrid pigs.”

“Naturally!”

While Dina held a conversation with the mayor, I was feeling rather impressed. It seemed that the orcs were quite committed to their sleazy lifestyles. Maybe—just maybe—that’s why you were dubbed as monsters. But I’m strangely thankful. At the very least, I’ll know I’m doing the world a favor when I’m hunting orcs.

“Please rest at ease! The orc nest will be crushed without fail! By this guy!”

Dina indicated towards me with a triumphant expression. On the other hand, the mayor shot me another doubtful glance.

“I beg of you, please save this village.”

The village chief lowered his head, pumping me with motivation. Promising the orc nest’s destruction, Dina and I left the building.

“Now what? Should we exterminate them at once?”

“That sounds delightful, but we’ll need to make preparations. It’s entirely possible for the orcs to raid the village during my absence.”

We probably won’t encounter any hardships in defeating the orcs. There’s the level gap after all. No matter how unprepared we are, there’s no chance of losing to them. However, it’s our loss if the orcs decide to kill the mayor while we’re away. If our client dies on us, we won’t be able to collect our reward.

“And that’s where a guard comes in.”



“A guard?”

“Yeah, a single golem should suffice. It won’t be very strong, but if it can even delay the orcs, then it will have served its purpose.”

While giving this explanation, I gathered the required components from the ground. Then, tapping power into an alchemist skill, a stone golem was produced.

A golem’s strength relies on the skill of the creator. To calculate a golem’s level, the alchemist’s class level would be added to half of the Alchemist’s total levels. For instance, a golem constructed by a level 20 alchemist with 5 class levels, would be level 15 ( $20 \div 2 + 5$ ). Moreover, if the same alchemist was to have 20 class levels, he would be able to produce golems stronger than himself.

This is why golems are efficient for early game leveling. At level 1, it’s possible for an alchemist to produce golems 5 times his own strength. However, while the class level caps at 100, normal levels can be raised to 1000. This means golems lose their effectiveness during late game. In the long run, even if I were to produce a golem, it would only be level 600 at best ( $1000 \div 2 + 100$ ). Furthermore, the materials also affect a golem’s levels. Although a level 600 golem is workable with quality ingredients, level 100 is the most I can hope from the materials at hand... in short, it lacks the fighting power to be of use to me. However, it should serve well as a village guard.

“No, no. That’s way more an enough. Do you know how many million eru a level 100 golem is worth nowadays!?”

“So a golem from the roadside can fetch such a price...”

Anyhow, now we have a guard for the village. After ordering the golem to dispatch any orcs that draw near, I left the village.

Treading on grass, we headed towards the location indicated on the map. It was easy to spot. Not only was it marked on the map, but the pigs didn’t even bother to hide.

There were two chattering orcs standing guard in front of a cave entrance. Although they more or less kept an eye on the surroundings, they were evidently off guard. It was the naive behavior of someone who had never considered death.

“We found it. Ugh, they’re repulsive sights no matter how many times I’ve seen them... the Goddess Alovenas must also be grieving over those failed creations of hers.”

“That’s quite the sharp tongue you have. According to the church, the Goddess is a merciful and loving deity that doesn’t that doesn’t show favoritism, you know?”

“That’s just a downright lie. It’s another one of those religious lies. There’s no question that a goddess also has likes and dislikes.”

Half listening to Dina curse at the orcs, I considered how we could take care of them.

1. Boldly approach and kick them to death.

Frankly, there isn’t a single reason to be wary of the orcs. Even if we were to exterminate them out in the open, we would win the battle with ease. However, this method risks the possibility of orcs fleeing from the spot.

2. Using alchemist skills to eradicate the nest

I think this is our safest bet out of all of our choices. Although I’m unable to use offensive magic, alchemist skills make it possible for me to perform a large-scale offensive strike. However, in this case, much of the valuable meat will be lost under the debris.

3. Freely use skills to swiftly assassinate orcs

This way, there’s no chance for any orcs to escape, nor will I raise a commotion. This strategy makes orc meat a priority. Though we don’t know how many orcs are present, one in every 50 orcs drop the status enhancing item. This means, with my slight fortune boost, I’ll be able to obtain an estimated 3 items from 100 orcs,

Orc meat is an expendable item that will randomly raise your HP from 100 to 300 points. In the worst case, three uses grants 300 HP... Miniscule, right? But, eventually, it adds up.

“Now then, let’s finish this quickly.”

“Please crush them, Ruphas-sama!”

I began item creation with an alchemist skill. Using the earth as material, I would produce weapons. First, I’ll create about 30 swords. Then, using the Esper skill,

“Psychic Throw”, I’ll keep them afloat.

In all honesty, I specialize more in close combat, and four of my chosen classes are suited towards close combat to prove it. Well, the strider class is also fairly oriented for close combat, so I guess that makes five.

On the other hand, on top of being incapable of using offensive magic, ranged combat isn’t exactly my forte. I don’t possess the archer class, and my esper class was only raised to level 50. However, with assistance from the alchemist class, it’s not impractical.

The alchemist skill is literally a skill that produces items from nearby materials. These items range from healing items to defensive equipment. This isn’t limited to “official” items either. With the right combinations, it’s possible to craft unique items. Although I’ve only created broadswords in the meantime, I could potentially forge weapons on par with legendary equipment.

The Esper class is a class for psychic abilities. The skills allow you to constrain opponents and move objects without coming into direct contact with them. The skill “Psychic Throw”, being one of the more typical abilities of the esper class, allows the user to fire objects at enemies. Not only is it extremely compatible with the alchemist class, it’s quite badass to fire off swords with your arms crossed.

A total of 30 swords were aimed and launched at the orcs. The blades pierced their heads, severed their limbs, and punctured their hearts. In the blink of an eye, the former orcs assumed appearances of porcupines. They were in no shape to move. I left the brush, drawing the swords out of the corpses with telekinesis.

...Huh? To say nothing about the 3% drop rate, wouldn’t I be able to obtain orc meat by dismantling them by hand?

“Aw... that’s no good, Ruphas-sama. Now the fillet is damaged. Orc fillet—the most tender portion of an orc which can increase your vitality, but if it suffers even a scratch, it loses its effect.”

“Hm? Really?”

“Yup. That said, orcs are pretty agile during combat, so it’s quite often that it happens. It’s said there’s a 3 percent chance of being able to defeat an orc without hurting the fillet and dismantle the corpse without damaging it... did you forget all of this while

you were sealed?”

Listening to Dina’s explanation, I felt quite impressed.

I see. So that’s the three percent. To think a game item’s drop rate would have such a fascinating explanation. But what’s important is that I understand that if I can butcher the orcs skillfully, I can drastically increase the drop rate.

“Thank you for the explanation. This will be of great help.”

I’ve just been a bit wasteful. I doubt after stabbing the orcs repeatedly that there are any organs intact, so the fillets are out of question. Although these two bodies are perfectly edible, we can’t expect an HP raise from them.

“Also, orcs have high vitality, so I don’t recommend attacks aimed directly at their bodies. Strikes aimed at the head or neck are far more effective.”

“Understood. You’re quite well informed, aren’t you?”

Hearing a scuffle from the cave, I sent a single blade flying towards the orc preparing for his shift. The pig was beheaded instantly. As the head rolled to the ground, Dina awarded me with applause and a couple words of praise. Then, having dismantled the corpse, I was able to successfully retrieve an orc fillet in its full glory.

“Look, Dina. It was a success.”

“I would expect nothing less from Ruphas-sama.”

That said, If I were still “myself” I wouldn’t have been able to endure the gory process of dismantling a corpse, much less bring myself to kill a living creature. In times like these, I’m truly thankful to have Ruphas’ mental durability.

Now then, there’s still a shit ton of orcs.

To fulfill the request, we’ll murder every last orc in the area.

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## 【Some Useless Extra Details】

- The main methods of raising stats at the level cap

### 1. Enhancements from the shop

There exists an in-game shop that accepts money for status enhancement potions. Spam clicking these items is one of the basics of the basics. However, unlike monster drops like orc meat, each usage only raises a stat by a single point. Moreover, the cost rises with your stats. Once a character achieves stats similar to Ruphas', a single point of strength amounts to 10,000 to 20,000 eru. The bank accounts of high-level players usually disappear into this shop.

### 2. Enhancements from monster drops

All enhancement items dropped from monsters are of high rarity. When worst comes to worst, drop rates can sink as low as 0.05%. What's more, all of the monsters that drop them reward little money, so it's incompatible with the first method.

Although orcs have a 3% drop rate, high-level players are constantly camped at the spawn points, so this becomes difficult as well. Tens of level capped players used to huddle around a single spawn point. A newborn orc barely had the time to shriek. Remembering this, Ruphas felt deeply moved that the orcs had gone from being hunted to being the hunters.

### 3. Crafting enhancement items with alchemy

Despite that every component needed was extremely painful to obtain, it raises no concerns with money. It's also the most realistic method out of the three listed. Thus, raising the alchemist class level to 100 became a kind of common sense among high-level players. However, the monsters that drop the ingredients won't fill your pockets with a single penny, so it's not compatible with the first method. Naturally, it's also incompatible with the second method.

Which is the gist of the setting that I've sort of thought up.

Just thinking of the setting is super fun.

Actually, I have the most fun thinking about the setting. But as to whether the readers think it's interesting...



# Chapter 7

## The Wild Orc Was Thrown Into Complete Darkness

“What are yo—Gaaah!”

“I—Inva—Gwaaah!”

“It’s someone from that vill—Gaaah!”

“Heh, you’ve done well to come this far! It is I, the strongest of the orcs’ four heavenly ki—Gyaaaa!”

“Wa—wait! My life! Please spa—Aaaaaah!”

Death had swiftly claimed the lives of countless orcs that laid splayed behind me. As I ventured further into the nest, I fixed my gaze upon a pair of future corpses.

That aside, I’ve taken this opportunity to test various skills, but this “instant death” phenomenon has been constantly getting in my way.

“Dina, how’s it going on your side?”

“This one’s... also spoiled...”

My job was to harvest the fillets from corpses and check for wounds. If the meat was in a healthy condition, it was stored away in a sack. Dina would see to everything else. Apparently, she’s using transfer magic to deliver the remaining corpses to the tower. She’s going to make some jerky with our “fruits of labor.”

While I’m grateful to have such a reliable secretary, we’ll be a bit overstocked with dried meat. Selling some into the market might be a good idea. Either way, I’ll leave it up to Dina.

“This should be our final destination.”

Kicking the door open, I staged my entrance...

The next moment, the startled guards' heads rolled to the ground. At the far end of the hall, a differently colored orc was impaled as it attempted to flee. Since only normal orcs drop orc meat, I had no business with an orc lord, a variant species.

"That should be the last of them, right?"

"Most likely."

Hearing Dina's reply, I exhaled.

Murder... comes to me like breathing. I'm afraid I won't be able to return to Earth even if I wanted to. Frankly, someone who thinks nothing of human lives has no place in Japan.

"And uuh, the kidnapped villagers—oh, there they are."

Dina's gaze fell on a cage just steps away.

On a second thought, was it really a cage?

Indeed, they were made unable to escape. That's for sure.

However, the cage was well-furnished, the captives were properly clothed, and precious stones and flowers had made their way the inside. Although their sleeping expressions were tinged with fear, not a finger was laid on them. At another glance, they looked almost like royalty.

Though that's how it should be, this would mean the orcs were actually decent creatures. They abducted women. That's for sure. However, it was done with the sincere purpose in mind.

For some unfortunate reason or another, all orc offspring are male, which leaves them no choice but to abduct female members of another race to breed with. In addition, they only target human mates since they're only race that can cross-breed with another species. Hm? Elves? They wouldn't even bat an eye.

However, it doesn't just end with mating.

A barbaric race like orcs are unable to properly nurse their own children. So unless they want the women to abandon their offspring, they would rather not displease them.

This is quite the troubling matter for orcs. That's why they try their hardest to please the women. They offered a lifestyle more luxurious than their own, provided plenty of food, and even went as far to proffer up jewels and flowers to curry their favor. Even

then, they would never lay a hand on a female without her consent and would protect the girls with their lives on the line.

Despite their impure motives, they're a herd of well-mannered pigs. However, that means little to the captives, and being worshiped by the monsters is just plain creepy. Although they're pitiful, it's impossible for them to live in harmony with the other races.

"Alright, the girls are unhurt. Let's return them to the village."

"Should I erase their memories?"

"Why would we need to?"

"I think it would be for the best if they forgot about being kidnapped by the orcs."

"Hmph, are there any limits on your abilities?"

"If you're interested, I could rewrite both their personalities and their memories."

"...Well, it doesn't seem like we'll have to go that far. They look completely untouched after all."

The girls should be fine for the time being. Although I'm sure it was a frightening experience, they made it out unharmed. That said, I'll make sure to confirm this with the actual captives. And naturally, Dina will be the one doing the checking. I won't lift a finger.

Despite turning into a female, I'm still a man at heart. In other words, I wouldn't feel comfortable doing so. I've also lost interest in the opposite sex (females) in the process. It's sort of pathetic... it's hard to believe I used to hide my porno collection under my dresser.

"I understand. I'll finish up in just a moment."

"Alright. Try to work as fast as you can."

Leaving the girls in Dina's care, I began searching the chamber.

There should be plenty of stolen property and crops from the village hidden here.

I'll try to return as much as I can to the village. Even if I pity the orcs, I'm not kind

enough to abandon my job. Besides, stealing is stealing. My sympathy doesn't lighten any of their crimes.



Leaving the shelter of the orc nest, I channeled power into an alchemist skill. Though the caves haven't done anything wrong, it would be careless to leave them as is. The lingering scent of orcs might invite more of their kind, and their first instinct would be to attack the nearby village. So to prevent worse from coming to worst, I'll be thorough with my work.

"Transmute, Hrungrir's right arm."

As soon as the words left my lips, a massive fist of rock materialized above the caves. Roughly 50 meters wide, it's an advanced alchemy skill that excels in both range and magnitude.

The caves were crushed mercilessly, reducing the former settlement to rubble. A thunderous roar shook the air, the earth trembled, and debris scattered in the wind. Any slim chances of survival of the earlier massacre disappeared with the nest.

"Thank you for your hard work, Ruphas-sama. All of the captives are without a scratch."

"Ah, good job."

Having returned to my side with transfer magic, I thanked her for her hard work. Well, in reality, she did far more work than I did. Preserving the orc meat, selling it to the market, taking care of the captives—It's a wonder as to why "Ruphas" would treat her as an ornament before "I" replaced her. Isn't she ridiculously capable?

"Aaah. Which reminds me. I tried roasting this while I was at it. Want a bite? You should be plenty tired after moving around so much."

"That's..."

Dina pulled a plate out of thin air, holding it up for me to see. A savory, golden-brown steak rested on its surface, and an appetizing scent wafted through the air.

“It’s orc steak. It should be delicious with a serving of rice, you know?”

“Great, I’ll have some.”

Without another word of protest, I rested my bottom on a tree stump. Come to think of it, I haven’t taken a single bite of food since being summoned here. With so many things happening at once, it’s easy to forget not even a day has passed since I arrived. So my fingers snapped, and a wooden table rose from the ground.

“Wait, so orc meat keeps its buffing effects after being roasted?”

“Rest assured. It’s safe to cut the meat after it’s removed from the corpse. It’s orc fillet, a rare delicacy that raises the vitality of the person who consumes it. However, if harmed while the orc is alive, it loses its enhancing effects and the vitality is scattered throughout rest of the body. Whereas if it’s intact at the time of death, the vitality remains concentrated in the fillet... or so I’ve heard.”

“What’s this—mystery food?”

While listening to Dina’s explanation, I transmuted some wooden utensils and began dividing up the steak. The tender meat melted under the knife, filling me with anticipation.

And then, a single bite.

The delicacy dissolved in my mouth, it’s savory juices caressing my taste buds. Although it’s an overused expression, there’s no other way to express the tender sensation on my tongue. The delicious flavor that filled my mouth left me speechless.

Moreover, the tare sauce that complemented its sweet-salty taste was irresistible. It brought out the true potential of high-grade meat. Then, scooping up a spoonful of rice into my mouth, I discover another interesting combination. The strong flavor of steak and a mouthful of rice merged to form another serving of ecstasy. The two contrasting tastes worked in perfect harmony to cover for each other’s weaknesses.

“Is this tare sauce homemade?”

“Yes, is it to your liking?”

“Yeah, it’s amazing.”

I could eat forever. Although steak is best made with beef, I can't really make light of pork steak now that I've experienced it firsthand, can I? The delicious quality of their meat really proves that you really can't judge a book by its cover. It almost makes it okay for the orcs to be so hideous.

"Dina, you're not going to eat?"

"No, I'm fine."

"Hmph, alright then."

Is she being considerate, or does she detest orcs? Well, since she says so herself, I won't think too hard about it. Everyone has some kind of pet peeve or another. Having helped myself to the rest of the orc steak, I pulled up my status.

【Ruphas Mafahl】

Level 1000

Race: Flugel

HP: 335000→335300

SP: 44300

STR (strength): 9200

DEX (dexterity): 8750

VIT (vitality): 10300

INT (intelligence): 7300

AGI (agility): 10778

MND (willpower): 7550

LUK (luck): 9280

Alright, my health points went up accordingly. I still have four remaining fillets, so I can continue to raise my maximum health by at least 400 points. Though my HP is already beyond human comprehension, I'll continue to push the limits.

Actually, since competition has completely vanished, I'll be able to hunt orcs to my heart's desire. Even breaking into the millions doesn't seem like such a distant goal.



...on a second thought, that's impossible. No matter how delicious orc fillet is, it can't become a staple food. Besides, I'm willing to bet that the orcs would go extinct long before I could achieve those numbers. I'm rather surprised they weren't eradicated 200 years ago.

"Thank you for the food. It was truly delicious, Dina."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it."

Having finished the meal, Dina teleported along with the tableware. She returned only seconds later—this time without them. They were probably left somewhere in the tower.

...transfer magic must be so nice. I have zero aptitude for magic, so I'm seriously jealous.

"Now then, let's return, Ruphas-sama."

"Yeah."

After this short exchange, we departed for the village. During the trek back, I asked about her memory manipulation skill to break the silence.

"About your memory manipulating ability you mentioned earlier—Is there any way for someone to undo the spell?"

"My magic can't be undone in most cases. However, if the personality written over is too strong-willed, then it's possible for them to return to their original state."

"I see. So even if you erased their memories, there's a small chance that a few might recall being abducted."

While contemplating Dina's explanation, I muttered to myself. Although she's able to manipulate memories, it's still an imperfect ability. Perhaps it didn't erase memories, but rather hid them in the subconscious? Maybe that's why there's always a chance that someone could recover their memories.

"It seems like a really convenient skill, but sounds like a real pain to handle."

"You got that right."

Dina smiled wryly. Memory manipulation, huh?

That would be great for destroying evidence. There are plenty of scenarios in which this could come in handy.

Before we knew it, we had already arrived at the village with the former captives. Since I couldn't move my arms out from under my overcoat, the unconscious girls levitated in midair with the help of telekinesis.

"Ooooh! So you've returned! And those girls! So they were safe!"

The village chief hurriedly greeted us as we arrived. Setting the girls down gently by the chief, I took a step back. I'll leave all the talking to Dina, as always.

"Yes, it appears that we made it in time before the orcs made a move on them."

"Oho, that's good to hear. There's nothing more I could wish for."

Having delivered an explanation, I handed the girls over. In the end, all the kidnapping had amounted to was some pampering from the orcs. However, the girls only grew more frightened, and not a single orc was able to capture a woman's heart.

Appearance is key. Orcs carry the ultimate disadvantage the very moment they are born. Regardless of how gentlemanly they act, that is the one obstacle that they can never hope to overcome in this cruel world.

"Well then, here's the 1500 eru that I promised."

"Thank you."

"That, and... um, do you happen to know about the golem that has been guarding the village? Even us commoners can sense its tremendous power."

"That is a gift of kindness from my master. By all means, use it for the protection of the village."

I pondered to myself as the conversation went on. We've now obtained the food and funds for our travels. I feel like my worries have grown recently, but that's completely natural—considering the fact that I just transported to a parallel world. It's like visiting a foreign country, but on a completely different level.

That's enough for today. We will depart tomorrow.  
Who knew a single day could feel so long?

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- Orc monologue of 200 years ago

High-level adventurer: "Bahaha! It's an orc! Kill it!"

High-level adventurer: "You're dead meat!"

Orc: "Gaaaah! What are you people!? Do you guys have no hearts!?"

High-level adventurer: "Whaaaaaat!? Did you not hear what I said—!? Meat is my everything! It's an era of gallant heroes!"

High-level adventurer: "What's the color of YOUR meat!?"

High-level adventurer: "Keep quiet and let us eat your meat!"

High-level adventurer × 10: "Wha—!? An orc just spawned!? Waha! The early bird gets the worm!" *DONDONDONDONDON*

Orc: "You guys aren't humaaaaaan—!!

Additional information: The sum of the class levels is equal to the level cap. This means a level 200 player will have a sum of 200 class levels. That's why Ruphas has a sum of 1000 class levels. End of story (Chapter, I mean.)

# Chapter 8

## Journeying Across The Last Boss' Country

Video games change along with the times.

Ever since 1979, when “Space Invaders” made its first appearance in stores, video games have been constantly evolving to suit the era’s needs. Two years later, the first handheld game consoles were introduced to the market, and within three years, the Famicom (NES) was released to the public. Then, seven more years of innovation brought the Super Famicom (SNES) into existence. The Playstation emerged four years after that, and video games continued to change the lives of generations to come. While this new form of entertainment dominated the market, what continued to amaze players was the rapid evolution of graphics.

From the 8-bit NES to the 16-bit SNES. And by the time the Playstation had made its name, smooth computer graphics had become the norm. Players of that generation used to marvel at the graphics that the Playstation 2 had put on show. Nowadays, kids playing the same games would complain about the poor graphics. Just as CG technology advanced, players’ tastes became more refined in the process.

However, this didn’t mark the end of the evolution of video games. As the industry continued to thrive, games inched closer to reality. So much that people might have mistaken the graphics for photographs and the avatars for people if they weren’t projected on a display. It’s almost as if the VRMMOs that countless of authors have dreamed of might actually appear at any moment.

Sadly, it is nothing more than a dream with our current technology.

There are far too many risk factors involved with transferring your consciousness into the world of games. Perhaps it will become a reality some day. However, “some day” isn’t something we can measure, and at the very least, it isn’t “right now.”

—then why the hell am I shaking inside a carriage in the body of a girl? I would have created a male avatar if I had known this would happen.

“Ruphas-sama, I see it now! It’s the next town!”

“Ah, I see it too. So, sit back down already.”

Dina, who was sitting beside me a moment ago, was now shaking me back and forth. What's more, it didn't help that the carriage also shuddered as it traveled. I had to suppress my urge to vomit.

By subjugating the orcs and selling off their meat, we were able to ride this carriage to Suvell with 5500 eru at hand. Of course, it goes without saying that Dina didn't sell any HP enhancing fillets.

That aside, I'm a bit curious as to where she sold them. Since she's able to teleport, almost anywhere is possible. Transfer magic is convenient, but it looks like she's unable to take others along with her. Perhaps the ability is restricted to inanimate objects, or maybe she needs the consent of the other party. Well, according to Dina, the transfer fails if she has even a speck of dislike for the target.

Ah, one more thing.

After consuming the remaining four fillets, my current HP has risen to 336100 points. But, ouch, since the messy digits are really bothering me, I'll avert my eyes for now.

"Thank you for your patronage—"

Handing the coachman the money, we stepped off the carriage and headed towards the gates of the royal capital. There, a number of soldiers stood guard, and a few were carrying out what looked like security checks. Now that I think of it, this city is under attack of one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, huh? I'm sorry for your troubles.

"You two, stop right there!"

We froze in place. I kind of knew this would happen. My entire body is concealed by an overcoat after all. I seem suspicious no matter how you look at it.

"This is Suvell territory from here on. Can you show me your passports?"

Did he just say... passport?

Hey, this is a first for me. You didn't need those back when this was... ah, you did. When this was a game, influence played a part in everything. In order to enter a different nation, a player needed to gain the ruler's recognition first. If you think about it, it's a pretty similar concept to a passport.

But unfortunately for me, I have nothing of the sort. But Dina, oh—Dina's a lifesaver. Calmly, she reached a hand into her breast pocket and passed the gatekeeper some

papers.

“Here. These are our documents. Please confirm them for yourself.”

“Thank you.”

Just what is this world-class secretary? She’s way too prepared.

“Hmph. So you’re a traveling merchant without citizenship of any country. Your names are Dina and Saphur, and your identification papers seem authentic as well.”

“There’s been a lot of forgery lately, hasn’t there? Well, with you here, the only officials they’ll fool are the nearsighted. Hahaha!”

This man needs glasses.

I’ve never gone out of my way to get an ID, so that’s undoubtedly fake. And for god’s sakes, put some more thought into my alias! Saphur... isn’t that just my name written backwards!?

“Hmph, you may pass.”

“Thank you very much.”

Having made it out in one piece, Dina’s face split into a wide grin.

However, just when we were about to pass through the gate, a voice called out for a second time.

“Ah, wait. I still need to take a look at your face under that overcoat. I apologize, but I still have to make sure it’s not a demon or a monster under there.”

I thought this would happen. And because of that, I didn’t panic. Indeed, I’m an infamous figure known across the land, but my distinctive features are my sleek, black wings. In a world without photographs, the only ones that could recognize me from just my face are long-lived individuals that had seen me in person.

To break it down, if Oda Nobunaga sauntered around with modern clothing and a different hairdo, I’m sure no one would notice and shout “Hey! Isn’t that Oda Nobunaga!?” So as long as the gatekeepers don’t have wings, fangs, or pointed ears, they’re obviously human. In that case, revealing my face shouldn’t pose any problems.

“I’m sorry about that... will this much be fine?”

I pulled my hood back and tried my best to smile. Just a friendly reminder, but I’m definitely not a narcissist. However, as a former man, I’m quite aware that my current appearance is that of a matchless, young beauty. A man knows best about another man’s tastes. The behavior, personality, and facial expressions that can make a man’s heart skip a beat—I know them all. Believe it or not, it’s one of the reasons why catfishers are extremely attractive. And naturally, this knowledge can also be wielded as a weapon.

“Forgive her, sir gatekeeper. If she didn’t cover her face, she would be called on by simply walking through the streets.”

“Ye—yeah... that’s certainly true.”

“So how about letting us through? I don’t have all day to wait for your approval.”

If I was him, I wouldn’t want to leave a bad impression on this beauty. Even if we never meet again, I’d do anything to avoid being told something like “That gatekeeper’s breath smells. I don’t want to get any closer.” And depending on the individual, they might even shamelessly plead for forgiveness. However, in this situation, there is only one right answer for a healthy man who can read the atmosphere.

“O—of course you can! By all means, please pass through!”

Well, that’s just how it works. I pulled my hood back on and finally crossed the border. On the opposite side of the gate, water stretched as far as the eye could see. The gate merged with a single bridge stretching across the magnificent waters, and the royal capital stood on the other end.

This country didn’t exist when I had played the game. It’s a young nation with only 200 years of history; its founder being none other than one of the seven heroes of the rebellion—the “Wisdom King”, Megrez. According to Dina, the hero still passes his days in this country despite retiring from the throne.

I thought about it as we walked.

Megrez and I began playing the game at around the same time. There were times when we fooled around together and times when we fought as a party. Even during the decisive battle, not much had changed in our relationship. *We* knew the fight was just an act to revive the game’s competition. It was nothing but a performance, and I just



happened to be playing the villain. But when all was said and done, we were still the players who shared the joy of playing the same game.

The real question is: who exactly is the Megrez of this world? Perhaps, is he the committed gamer I knew over the internet? Or perhaps, is he a different person, completely unrelated to the person in my memories? And if that's the case, what happened to his memories of fooling around with me?

The "Sword King", Alioth.

The "Beast King", Dubhe.

The "Smith King", Mizar.

The "Adventurer King", Phecda.

The "Wisdom King", Megrez.

The "Heavenly King", Merak.

And last but not least, the "Vampire Princess", Benetnasch.

These were the players that I once partied with. Each representing one of the seven major races, they were among the highest ranked players of the game. They are also individuals I must meet at all costs. Although the first four have passed away due to their shorter life spans, the last three still remain in this world. There is something that I must find out—whether if there are others stranded in this abnormal situation... or if I'm alone in this predicament.

"So this is... the country that Megrez founded."

I raise my head.

Gazing at the capital, the first word that comes to mind is "water"—a city of water. A large gate decorated with intricate patterns framed the entrance to the capital, and thanks to the higher elevation, the metropolitan comes into clear view.

That said, the fact that my eyesight has become abnormally sharp also helps, and I've grasped a general idea of the country's layout.

At the heart of the capital, the royal castle stands surrounded by the lake's gentle waves. Bridges in all four directions form pathways from the castle to neighboring islands, and another bridge extends from each of the islands to the lands that make up Suvell's borders. The five islands and the imperial castle make up the city of water. Eight bridges then weave the separate pieces of land into a single structure. The cityscape working in perfect harmony with Earth's natural structures is quite the sight

to behold—and an impressive feat of human architecture.

The lake's reflective surface glistened in the sunlight, and the trees swayed in the wind. But there was more to Suvell than just its landscape. If you look hard enough, you'll notice the curious orbs of light floating about the capital.

Back in the game, magical power drifting through the air was called "mana". That's probably it. The concentrated mana gave the area a somewhat mystical presence. It was just what you would expect from the wisdom king's country.

"The magical country of Suvell. It's a nation founded by an elf known as the 'Wisdom King', one of the seven heroes. The area is renown for its abnormal concentrations of mana and rapid advancements in magic and technology. It's where the magicians and scholars from the far corners of the world aspire to share their ideas. However, because of the abundance of mana, flugels rarely come to pay a visit. Ruphas-sama, is your body holding up fine?"

"Nothing's wrong. I'm not too sure about others of my kind, but as far as I'm concerned, it's actually rather pleasant."

Hearing Dina's concerns, I took a closer look at the mana around us. I feel no discomfort being around the wandering mana. Though I've heard about the flugels' dislike of demonic power, I show no such symptoms. Perhaps race's distaste for mana is completely psychological? That would explain why I, who has no personal preference, am completely alright.

"So, about our next course of actions... where would you like to go after this?"

"Naturally, to meet Megrez. I have a lot of things to ask him after all."

"Straight to the point, hm? However, if anywhere, Megrez is most probably resting in the castle. You don't mean we're going to break in from the front, do you?"

I shook my head at Dina's words.

In addition to the oncoming invasion of a magical beast, breaking into the castle would only add to the chaos. In which case, sneaking in, or waiting for him to leave the castle are much safer options. We would be much better off by gathering information first.

"Instead, I think we should slip in quietly. We shouldn't raise any unnecessary commotion."

As Dina implies, I'll slowly familiarize myself with the capital before inching towards our goal. This country is one of the largest storehouses of knowledge on the planet, which means there will definitely be a place where I can read up on the world's history. I know too little of the 200 years that passed without me. First, I'd like to cover up for my lack of knowledge. In that aspect, it's fairly convenient for Aries to have chosen this city to attack.

Let's see... looking for a library comes first.

With a clear goal in mind, I asked a passerby for directions.

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### 【Some Useless Extra Details】

- Locations in X-gate online

In the world of X-gate online, Norse mythology was widely used for location and weapon names. However, the supreme deity's name had absolutely nothing to do with Norse, so it wasn't the game's sole inspiration or anything.

Then again, other than the original nations produced from the early stages of game development, player established country names varied left and right. Therefore, names from other cultures also popped up every now and then. Strange names like "Zeon", "M78 galaxy", and "The six paths to heaven" also came up once in a while. The Norse model was forgotten, and the game administration didn't mind either. Rather, there's a limit to how far you can go with Norse mythology. Usually, a game would pull names from a number of cultures. And so that's what they did.

As a result, the game was submerged into a sea of cultures, its foundation lost in the waves.

Developer: "...Well, we still have the location names..." (trembling voice)

## Chapter 9

### A Kind Middle-Aged Man Appeared

“Library? The libraries are on the eastern islands. Is this your first time in this country?”

I asked a friendly, yet stern human for directions. He was bald, had a thick set of eyebrows, and looked straight at us with a pair of bright eyes. Scars lined his face and a thick scabbard gripped tightly to his back. All of this in addition to his worn down armor gave him the typical appearance of a mercenary.

However, I deemed that he was a sociable man from his vigorous smile. It was an expression that drowned out his fearful appearance, replacing it with a warm and fuzzy sensation. That was the kind of man he was.

“The eastern area, huh... that means...”

“This is the southern island, so you’ll have to cross the bridge on your right. The eastern area is where scholars and students meet. Schools, libraries, museums... and pretty much anything else having to do with knowledge is probably over there.”

Dina and I nod in understanding. It seems that each of the four islands play different roles in the nation. Just hearing this tickles my sense of adventure. Once we’ve flipped through the libraries, we should have a look around.

“Thank you very much. We will be on our way.”

“Hey, Hey. Wait a second, miss. Don’t tell me you’re planning to walk there, are ya? It’s getting dark, ya know?”

The man stopped us. Then, he slipped a map out from his pocket and began explaining.

“The country’s fairly large. A single island is about 500 square kilometers by itself. With the royal palace and the bridges, the nation covers somewhere around 2500 square kilometers. It’ll take decades for you to get to the other side on foot.”

“Then how does everyone get around?”

“We take the monorail. Come along, I’ll show you to the terminal.”

A monorail, huh? That’s a modern approach for a change. Well, it’s not like this world doesn’t have the concept of science in the first place. Even magic exists, so one or two convenient forms of transportation shouldn’t be out of question.

“Whoops—almost forgot to introduce myself. The name’s Gants. I’m a mercenary working for the nation’s border security. Well, today’s my day off, though.”

“My name is Dina, a peddler, and this shady guy in red is Saphur-sama, my employer.”

I ground my heel into Dina’s foot, ignoring her pained expression. Who the hell introduces someone as “shady”? Although I *am* indisputably shady, you’re the one who suggested this outfit!

“You’re dressed quite oddly as well. Well, I’m sure you have your reasons. I don’t plan on prying.”

“...thanks.”

That saves us a lot of trouble. I uttered a single word of gratitude and followed quickly behind Gants.

“Um, if you’re okay with it, I’d like to know a bit more about this country.”

“Sure thing.”

Gants answered Dina’s questions quite readily. He’s quite the open-hearted man for someone we just met. It seems like my first impression of him wasn’t far off the mark

“I’ll start with the nation’s five districts. The first is the southern ‘Trade District’, which is the area you should have seen upon entering the country. The region houses a jumble of industries competing to sell their goods, so it’s purposely placed near the gates to draw the attention of visitors and tourists. However, the constant attacks from Aries, one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, have caused a decline in its population in recent years.”



...my head hurts.

These feelings about a subordinate that I've never met... are ones I'll never be able to put into words. But for the time being, prepare to get the shit kicked out of you, Aries. Naturally, I won't be holding back.

Ah, no worries. If my memory serves me right, I've maxed Aries' levels to 800. He should be able to survive a couple of kicks at full force.

On that note, I'll be going on a bit of a tangent. Familiars like Aries will never surpass its owner in terms of levels. For instance, if a level 500 player tames a level 1000 monster, its level sinks below 500. That's because a tamed monster's highest level is equal to the sum of half of its owner's level and triple the number of his class level. In my case, the level cap becomes 800 ( $1000 \div 2 + 3 \times 100$ ). Then again, even if the formula produces a number higher than the tamer's level (e.g. If a tamer is level 100 with 100 class levels, theoretically, they would have a 350 level cap), the player's level acts as the limit instead. In simpler terms, a tamed monster will never surpass its owner in strength.

With some simple math, you'll also find that a familiar's level matches its owner's until level 600—assuming that their class level is capped at 100. By level 700, familiars are rendered little to no use, and most tamers join parties.

Furthermore, monster tamers are only capable of maintaining one familiar at a time. Taming a hundred familiars doesn't change the fact that you can't summon an army. Granted, familiars stronger than players would also destroy the game's balance. Solo players would run rampant, and the game would crumble as an MMO.

In the first place, the cash shop can resolve some of these problems to some extent. Producing a level 1000 familiar isn't impossible. However, truth be told, your best option as a tamer remains unchanged.

"The eastern areas make up the 'Scholarly District', which we already talked about, so I'll leave it out. Next up is the 'Industrial District' to the west, where magical engines, tools, and the monorails we'll be riding are manufactured. Although it's nothing in comparison to the artisan nation of 'Brutgung', the location is famous for its dense population of skilled mechanics."

"...magical engines, Brutgung... both are things I've never heard of."



I whispered into Dina's ear as he continued to explain. Both are names that I have no knowledge of. At the very least, it wasn't vocabulary from the game. Having voiced my uncertainties, Dina began filling me in in a similarly low voice.

"The magical engine is something Megrez invented 20 years ago. It's machinery that uses mana as its source of fuel. In addition to being incredibly cheap to fuel, it's many times more efficient than burning coal. The magical engine is a novel piece of machinery that has drawn quite some attention. However, it's unpopular with flugels, so it has yet to completely rob coal's place in the industry."

So that's what it was.

It's this world's substitute for petroleum or kerosene. Though I don't know how abundant mana is, they'll eventually exhaust the land's natural reserves. Or perhaps, is mana an infinite resource? I'll have to relearn common sense here.

"Brutgung is a nation founded by another of the seven heroes—the "Smith King", Mizar. It's a great settlement of dwarves and artisans alike. In fact, the majority of the world's industrial goods are manufactured and exported from that country alone."

"I see."

Manufacturing... the subject is yet another unexplored territory for me. But having received my answer, I redirected my attention back to Gants' explanation.

"The northern island serves as the 'residential district'. Most residences are concentrated in that area. Being the island furthest away from the country's gates, it is currently the second safest location in the country."

"Why second? Wouldn't it be the safest if it's the furthest?"

"The thing is, miss, monsters don't just come through the gate like good citizens like you. While the lake does serve as a natural fortress, there's no guarantee that monsters won't come and bite us from behind. In reality, monsters that fly or swim can completely ignore the gates."

His logic is quite straightforward. Just as he implies, there aren't monsters kind enough to challenge the border patrol as a courtesy. However, I find it strange that they don't invade via water. As if reading my mind, Gants jumped into another explanation.

"That said, coming through the gates might still be a better tactic. The lake that

encompasses the nation is actually a massive water golem that Megrez-sama transmuted. Pretty amazing, right? The lake that protects the nation is actually the ultimate defense—almost like a guardian deity.”

I am honestly impressed.

Although I’m also a level capped alchemist, the thought of transmuting an entire lake never crossed my mind. But since this isn’t a game confined to a display, anything goes.

In a game, lines of code limit what you can and cannot do. However, this is reality. And in reality, there are no restrictions that determine what will or will not register as transmutation material—whether it’s a gust of wind or a body of water.

...maybe I’ll give it a try when I have the chance.

But a water golem, huh?

In any case, Megrez made something quite interesting. Mana infused water should be a quality transmutation material. It wouldn’t be odd for such a golem to achieve the level cap.

...let’s see, why don’t we just take a look for ourselves...

[Observing Eye].

## 【Guardian Deity Levia】

Level 500

Race: Artificial Life-form

HP: 180000

SP: 0

STR (strength): 2750

DEX (dexterity): 800

VIT (vitality): 3400

INT (intelligence): 650

AGI (agility): 1028

MND (willpower): 722

LUK (luck): 2300

## 【Gants】

Level 82

Race: Human

Class Levels

Warrior: 82

HP: 6860

SP: 476

STR (strength): 303

DEX (dexterity): 263

VIT (vitality): 368

INT (intelligence): 99

AGI (agility): 245

MND (willpower): 72

LUK (luck): 208

Hmph, level 500, huh? Bearing in mind that this world's "sword saint" is level 120, that's laudable amount of strength. Above all, using the entire lake has really jacked up its HP. I mean, 180000 HP at level 500? Is this a bug?

Especially for golems, who can't make use of status enhancement items, these numbers are outrageous. Normally, a level 500, mana infused water golem's HP would amount to somewhere around 50,000 points. A pure water golem would have a slight advantage in HP, but it isn't significant.

Producing one with 180,000 is a completely different story. It's definitely a feat worthy of praise as the "Wisdom King."

On the other hand, Gants is just a newbie warrior. Ah, well, using our level 120 sword saint as a reference, doesn't that make him incredibly strong? Well, at least he's not weak... I guess.

Gants continued explaining.

"Lastly, the central island is composed of the 'noble district'. This is where royalty and nobility live—a place far out of reach for commoners like us. If you trespass, you'll be

arrested on the spot, so make sure to watch out for yourselves.”

So Megrez resides where the privileged class live. This just makes it all the more difficult to slip in from the front. Well, we can think about it later.

“And we have arrived. This is the terminal.”

Needless to say, our destination was considerably different from the subway terminals of modern-day Japan. Rather, it looks like the inside of an iron casket. There are no escalators, handrails, or yellow lines to keep away from. Flashy advertisements and digital noticeboards are nowhere to be found. It was just a metal box used to board monorails.

Unsurprisingly, the monorail itself was another metal cage, but installed with sofas and windows. To put it in a nutshell, we were going to ride a metal box enclosed within another metal box.

“Now then, this is as far as I’ll take you. If you have the chance, be sure to find me again.”

“Gladly. Thank you so much, Gants-san.”

“You really saved us back there. I give you my thanks.”

We couldn’t expect him to lead us to the Scholarly District, so we gave our thanks and bid our farewells. Having the patience to guide complete strangers through the city was already more than we could ask for. Waving to the kindhearted mercenary who aided our journey, Dina and I boarded the monorail.

Alright, the scholarly district, huh?

I guess that’s where I’ll make up for the 200 years of history class I’ve slept through.

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### 【Some Useless Extra Information】

- The biggest problem with the Novel system

There were no major problems when the game first launched, so while the players continued to multiply, the number of authors seemed measly in comparison. In

response to this problem, game administration invited publishing sites from overseas to fill in the gaps. Even then, the novel system was unable to cope with the game's rapidly growing population. Most stories described fierce wars between nations, the subjugations of a rare monsters, or the contributions of certain individuals on the battlefield. For these reasons, players willing to pay for a proper story began to dwindle. It's a tough world out there.

- Issue #2: Copyright

As one would expect, there were plenty of players who modeled their avatars after popular characters from copyright productions, and story adaptations for these players were impossible. That's how the saying "it's best to avoid copyrighted roleplay" came to be. Nevertheless, such avatars remained prevalent in the game.

# Chapter 10

## The Wild Last Boss Reads A Book

The accelerating monorail slid silently along the tracks. Whether it was powered by electricity or mana was of little importance to the passengers riding it. At most, the monorail was only slightly faster or slower.

The scenery, however, is another story. The magnificent waters blur by and a breathtaking city drifts in the midst of a lake as vast as the ocean. My chest wells up with curiosity and my heart throbs with anticipation. Even from within the monorail, I can make out every townspeople, tending to their daily routines. I felt like a child gazing out of a car window.

Stepping off of the monorail felt like entering a completely different country. The streets were mostly occupied by people with sharp-features and frail-bodies. Almost every one of them looked like they suffered from malnutrition. So much that you couldn't help but worry that their thin frames might collapse at any moment. However, what especially caught my eyes were the long-eared beauties—elves.

In the game, elves typically never left the forest, secluding themselves in the thickest parts of the woods. But some things sure have changed in 200 years. Now, I could catch sight of elves strolling downtown or making small talk with humans. I could have sworn I even spotted a middle-aged human and a young elf holding hands in public.

But keep in mind that human and elven lifespans are different. That's why when cleverly worded, you might not realize that the elf might have lived a far longer life. In simpler terms, he's tied the knot with a timeless beauty. I hope he dies alone.

We found the library immediately. Luckily for me, the grand building was placed just steps away from the terminal. Moreover, the library towered over its surrounding buildings, easily making it the tallest structure on the block. I slipped through the entrance and made my way inside.

Midway, a female librarian cast me a sideways glance, but didn't say anything in particular. The library is a public space after all. As long as I don't break any rules, there's no reason to question me.

It was a circular hall with desks lined throughout the middle. Shelves upon shelves stacked against the wall and books were crammed into every open space. Of course, this was not to say that the room was sealed off. There were proper corridors leading in and out of the hall so it wasn't suffocating. I headed towards the history section and scanned the titles.

"Record of Midgard's Genesis ~ Why Goddess Alovenas Created the World~"

"History of Midgard • The Birth of the Seven Races"

"Record of Midgard's Wars—From the Appearance of the Demon Race to the Present Day"

These volumes... shouldn't really matter. They don't mention events of the last 200 years and probably won't vary much from the game I knew. What I really want to know are the happenings after my supposed death.

"The Black Winged Overlord: Ruphas Mafahl's Military Prowess"

"Legendary Figures of the Past: Ruphas Mafahl"

"Historical Analysis: Was Ruphas Mafahl really Evil?"

"Ruphas Mafahl: The only Ruler to achieve World Domination"

This area's packed with books about myself. I'm curious to know how I'm perceived by society, so I'll take the "Legendary Figures" and the "Historical Analysis" volumes and move on to the next section.

That, and I'm really starting to appreciate telekinesis. I would have leveled it to 100 instead of 50 if I had known it was this convenient... That said, the esper class didn't yield the greatest results in combat, and sorting through books wasn't something done in the game.

"The Seven Heroes – Brave Warriors who Defeated the Black-Winged Overlord"

"The Seven Heroes – Glories and Follies"

"Legendary Figures of the Past: Alioth"

"Legendary Figures of the Past: Dubhe"

"Legendary Figures of the Past: Mizar"

"Legendary Figures of the Past: Phecda"

"Mankind's Rise and Fall. Was Humanity Mistaken!?"

"Death to the Seven Heroes! Historian Williams Talks about Mankind's Greatest Blunder"



These shelves handle the history of the seven heroes, meaning it'll talk about the 200 years I've missed out on. Come to think of it, the reason why Megrez and some others aren't included in the "Figures of the Past" is most likely because they're still alive. Living legends can't become "figures of the past."

Leaving that aside, a number of volumes openly criticize the seven heroes. Was that really acceptable? The founder of this country is none other than a living remnant of the seven heroes. Despite his retirement from the throne, there's no escaping the fact that he was a hero of the legends. I wouldn't find it strange if the author was charged with treason.

"Heheh, surprised? Turns out you aren't actually held in such negative light."

"...True, it's strange. And I thought I played a cold-blooded villain that toppled nations for fun."

"Well, while there are books written from that perspective, the initial fear has faded with time. At this point in time, some even see your era as one of peace and prosperity—a time when wars were nonexistent, and there was no reason to fear the demon race. Above all, Ruphas-sama wasn't such a heartless tyrant to begin with."



I was partly able to accept Dina's words. This is to say that I can understand the public's thoughts to a certain degree. Just a guess, but Ruphas is being treated as a historical figure like Napoleon or Nobunaga. If you think back to it, Oda Nobunaga did some messed up shit back then. But nowadays, people see him in a new light, often describing his character as "cool" or "badass". He has even been handpicked as the protagonist of a number of comics, riling up a large fan base.

For the people who tasted the horrors of Nobunaga firsthand, such things were unimaginable. However, for those who perceive history from a textbook, it's nothing more than a heartwarming story.

Therefore, we can safely assume that the author of this book wasn't an elf.

"Well, I guess it's time to hit the books. I'll be secluding myself for a while—what about you, Dina?"

"Naturally, I'll be joining you. There are some books I'd like to read as well."

"Oh? What kind?"

"This! 'Gunboy, Killed in Action: Volume 1 ~ Gunboy Dies on the Ground~'"

A light novel. Forgive me, but let's get this straight. Why the hell does the first volume kill off the protagonist in the *title* of the novel? Well, it does make me oddly curious in its own regard.

"By the way, the second volume—"Tragedy: Death on the Battlefield"—and the third—"Death by Chance" are also masterpieces!"

"Don't they all just die?"

I pushed down my sudden urge to read them and settled into one of the chairs. First, I'd like to research the 200 years of my absence. Having a clear goal in mind, I flipped a book open.

Let's see...

The goddess Alovenas governed the forces of water and money. Certain legends tell of

a peerless beauty adorned with striking eyes and hair the color of the sea. Others tell of golden locks of hair that glistened like moonlight.

Some say she was a benevolent goddess who loved all in the world she created. Others recall a deity who held scorn for the repugnant races that tainted her name—

Ah, wrong book. I returned the volume to its rightful shelf. This time, I made sure I was holding the right title.



—Ruphas Mafahl

200 years ago, a supreme being brought the unification of the world. Her untarnished skin, sleek black wings, and alluring figure made her an unparalleled beauty on the face of Midgard. Such were the words of Merak, one of the seven heroes.

Powerfully, powerfully, she pressed forward. Whether they be man, beast, or even demons, all cowered under her rule. Yet to this day, her motivation to rule the world is still shrouded in mystery.

However, the people of that time knew... that although Ruphas Mafahl was a ruthless conqueror, she was by no means a heartless tyrant. Despite using brute force to unite the world, never did she abuse her power.

Noblesse Oblige. The nobility's duty to society.

In exchange for power, a ruler holds the obligation to serve the common people. Such were the overlord's favorite words, according to an elf of the time. Even if lands were obtained through military power, a ruler has the duty to ensure the people's protection.

An overlord bore the responsibility to ensure the lives, the futures, and the prospects of his citizens and their offspring. Ruphas Mafahl preached such ideals.

Being an ambitious conqueror, perhaps such words were hypocritical. In fact, those who opposed her accused her so. However, the fact that she never imposed unreasonable burdens upon her countrymen was also an indisputable truth. On the contrary, the overlord had overthrown corrupt rulers on several occasions.

Ruphas Mafahl was not a woman of virtue. However, as to whether she was really wicked... is a question often raised by the scholars of today.

So then why did she conquer the world? Such is a mystery yet to be uncovered. The only ones aware of the truth being the Twelve Heavenly Stars, fearsome enemies of mankind, we have little chance of finding out. But considering her actions as a monarch, perhaps she did not conquer out of selfish desires.

We don't know the facts. But what we do know is that we, as mankind, rejected, overthrew, and cast away her rule. However, these actions did not mark the dawn of mankind's new era. Instead, they ended up pleasing the demon race.

The seven great races were not the only ones that felt threatened by Ruphas Mafahl. Demons also feared and kept wary of this powerful being. Dreading the power of the black-winged overlord, her twelve generals, and the heroes of mankind, the demon race had hid themselves away.

Losing their greatest threat, the demon race jumped at the opportunity. On the other hand, mankind dispersed without Ruphas' rule.

In response, the warriors of the day stood in defense. However, the seven heroes had lost their original unity, and the scuffles almost always ended in crushing defeat for humanity. Hence, demons claimed 60 percent of the world, pushing mankind into a tight corner.

Today, mankind occupies a mere 30 percent of the world, a number that continues to diminish as we struggle for survival. Seven heroes were reduced to three, and they barely preserve the balance of our world—something that could crumble at a moment's notice.

A temporary peace—like a calm before a storm.

The world we know could come to ruin as I write these pointless ponderings of a single man. Yet, humanity has not a single idea of how to break out of this deadlock.



—the world is on the verge of collapse!?

Having reached this point in the book, I was less surprised than I thought I would be. While I did know the Demon King was going strong enough for countries to resort to

hero summonings, I had yet to take it to heart.

Expecting a hero to come along and solve the world's problems was about as far as I got. I mean, at a glimpse, the countryside looks like the very definition of peace, You wouldn't expect the world to be on the edge of destruction.

But this is the first time I've heard about mankind's decreasing territory. Well, actually, I did have some doubts—like how the nations were kind of small, and how the entire country of Suvell could easily fit inside of Hokkaido. However, countries often being nothing more than slightly larger cities in games, I could easily dismiss those doubts. Well, that's just what it boils down to.

I was naive. The world is in some pretty deep shit.

Then again, perhaps this was the obvious outcome. The demon race still retains its powerful leader, the Demon King. Moreover, several of the Twelve Heavenly Stars have turned over to join them. Even without the Heavenly Stars' betrayal, the strength of the general public had drastically declined and four of the seven heroes have kicked the bucket... Naturally, humanity would be driven to a corner. The fact that mankind continues to struggle is nothing short of a miracle.

Unless I retrieve the Twelve Heavenly Stars, mankind's going to be knee deep in shit. As far as I know, the only reason they fight is my "death" at the hands of mankind. Well, as their owner, I should be able to goad them back to my side... probably... hopefully. I'm trying to be optimistic here.

To think that the whimsical decisions I made in a game could influence the fate of another world... that its inhabitants would agonize over a victory I could brush aside as a game... there's something about it...

There's really something about it...

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### 【Some Relatively Useless Information】

- The truth behind the orcs' gentlemanly behavior

Originally, the orcs were depicted as fiendish beasts that forced their offspring upon the women they abducted. However, fearing customer complaints from parents, game

administration altered the lore. With this, the orcs degraded into helpless and almost pitiful creatures.

# Chapter 11

## Aries Falls Fast Asleep

There stood a single castle. However, only monsters crowded its halls, and the esteemed lord of the castle was nowhere to be found. Moreover, the throne that rested in the heart of the fortress remained forever vacant, as if patiently awaiting its master's return.

Beside the castle, an enormous sheep laid in silent enshrinement. His name was Aries. Having once served under the black-winged overlord, the "Ram" was a former pillar of the Twelve Heavenly Stars.

—this sheep dreamed of the nostalgic past.

Aries was once a weakling that lived to be hunted. He was a pitiful creature born into a upbringing of misfortune. That was the kind of existence he relived.

Rainbow sheep.

They were mythical creatures said to appear only once every five hundred years. A single strand of its wool surpasses the price of gold, easily making it a creature worth entire nations.

Moreover, cotton spun from its hairs is the ultimate material for clothing. While offering protection that outclasses armor, it's lighter than the finest of silks. What's more, the cloth serves as an incredible catalyst for magic.

Thus, it's said that capturing even one of these creatures would ensure a normal family seven generations of unimaginable wealth. The rainbow sheep is the very definition of a living treasure.

That said, he was nothing more than a monster with rainbow wool. —No, he was not even a monster, but a walking treasure—a prey laying in wait for its eventual demise. Neither did he have the means to protect himself, nor could he outrun others. Instead, he had a uselessly brilliant coat that drew all kinds of unwanted attention. People, demons, and other monsters—anything living was just another natural enemy. This was Aries' pathetic life as prey.



Intentional or not, there is no crueller feat that Alovenas could achieve. This creature had no purpose in life other than hiding, running, and eventually losing its life to its predators.

Every day was another desperate battle for his life. Every breath could be his last. And as he drowned in his fear of death, he continued to cry his heart out.

That's why, that encounter was nothing short of a miracle.

Hair dyed the beautiful scarlet of a blazing fire, eyes that shone crimson like the setting sun, and jet black wings forsaken by god. Aries could remember it like it was yesterday. After all, for Aries, it was in this moment that his life truly began.

"Oh? A rainbow sheep? Fancy meeting one here. Today must be my lucky day."

It was a time when his revered master was still young and inexperienced. Even so, she was a shadow of the great ruler that would eventually awaken. Aries, who was so accustomed to running from others, happened upon her.

*—I'm going to be killed.*

At a single glance, Aries was engulfed with overwhelming fear. There wasn't a single chance of survival. Despite being a fraction of her true potential, a calamity was a calamity.

"Oh? Aren't you afraid? Neither do you fight, nor do you run... do you have a death wish?"

As Ruphas approached the unresisting sheep, Aries drowned in self-loathing. Why was he *so weak*? Why was he *so pathetic*? Why was it that *his life* would only amount to becoming the prey of the strong? Even then, all he could do was stand frozen in fear, waiting for his untimely death. *It was so pathetic...*

"...so you cry."

Now, Aries noticed the warm tears streaming down his face. So he cried. He cried hot tears of misery and self-loathing, and he yelled at the injustices of the world.

However, instead of pouncing on her prey, the young girl asked the cowering weakling a question.

“What do you gain from those tears? Gratification? The satisfaction of self-pity and regret? Ridiculous! If you can shriek in such misery, then lob one last pebble! Shout one last insult! Fuel your hate until your very last moments! If they rob you of your happiness, you rob them right back! At the very least, that is how I’ve lived my life. And I plan to live up to my reputation.”

How arrogant, Aries thought. That was something only the strong would think to say. It was because *she* had never tasted defeat. What would she know about the grievances of the weak?

“So what will you do? Will you die in vain? And abandon any hope of survival you have left? Because if those are your thoughts, then I have no problem with butchering a creature with a smaller ego than a struggling animal in a slaughterhouse.”

Aries grit his teeth. This wasn’t how he was supposed to die. Aries didn’t want to die, ridiculed by the haughty girl before him. His entire existence screamed as death closed in on him.

That’s right, he didn’t want to die. This wasn’t the way he wanted to die! For the first time in his life, Aries harbored the will to live.

And he attacked. He bared his teeth and latched onto the arm of his predator. Now, Aries was sure he would lose his life. She’d take his life in a fit of rage and cast his soul into the darkest depths of hell.

The next course events... proved those thoughts wrong. Ruphas didn’t budge an inch. Instead, she murmured in a strangely comforting voice—

“...That’s right. That’s the way it should be. Looks like you can do it if you try.”

Aries’ jaw came loose. The girl was already—or rather, she had never been hostile to begin with. In his panic, Aries had caught himself in a spur of irrational fear. And realizing this, he released her arm.

“That’s right, rainbow sheep. If you are to live, then live every breath to its fullest. Whether you flee or fight, give your all in every step you take and in every punch you throw. All so that you can be more than just the prey of the strong.”

Aries finally came to his senses. Although she was strong, she suffered all the same. The flugels valued the white sheen of their wings above all else. Such pitch black

feathers would never go unnoticed. Rather, she would be shunned for her impurity. Surely, she had experienced incredible discrimination.

However, neither did she feel ashamed, nor did she drown in self-pity. Instead, she struggled, she strived, and above all, she arrived where she was now. The bold smile of this powerful being was enough proof of that.

*Ah, if only I could be like her,* Aries thought. A fresh stream of tears rolled down his wet cheeks as he yelled his wishes at the heavens. And a fallen flugel answered his prayers.

“Then join me. My power alone will not be enough to crush the cruelties of this world. Become strong, and together, we will bring the world under our own jurisdiction.”

—Become strong, Aries. Together with me.

Thus, Aries clutched tightly to her outstretched hands. Such was the first encounter between the black-winged overlord and the first of the Twelve Heavenly Stars. It was also a precious memory that failed to fade with time.

He could not forget—He refused to forget the fleeting moments he spent with his precious lord and savior.



While flipping through a book, I tried to wrap my head around Aries’ decision to invade the Suvell. For one thing, Aries was a rainbow sheep, a rather timid and harmless species. What could drive him to take such drastic measures time and time again?

Actually, the reason is obvious enough. I... Ruphas was defeated by heroes of mankind. But the real question is whether he was always aggressive enough to seek revenge.

In the game, familiars never left their tamer’s side, to say nothing of having real-life conversations. That’s why I can only imagine Aries’ personality. The best I can do is use the game as a reference. In that case, just what kind of character was he? I’m supposed to be his master, yet I don’t know a single thing about him.

I wonder when it was that I first met Aries. I’m sure it was before Ruphas hit the level cap and after I had taken up the tamer class. This was right around when I was

worrying about what to make my first familiar.

There's a larger variety of uses for a familiar than an alchemist's golem. Unlike golems, familiars can level up and consume status-enhancing items. Moreover, familiars can be both healed and revived. And although they do have level caps, the right monsters can even be of use at end game. At the time, I thought a dragon, being both powerful and flashy, would be ideal.

However, fate brought me a feeble sheep, the exact opposite of what I was looking for. What's more, it was a unique monster that developers probably just designed for kicks. Not a single sighting had been reported since the update, so rumor had it that it was just a joke in poor taste.

Upon meeting this creature, I attempted to tame it. God knows why the sheep refused to run, and when it finally attacked, my health barely dipped. Even so, it was my first familiar and I grew attached to it.

So I began dumping status enhancements into my newfound familiar. In exchange, I would shear the rainbow wool from Aries' back. This fetched a hefty price on the marketplace, with which I could purchase more status enhancement items.

With this constant income, I fed Aries one skill after another, and his weak self disappeared without a trace. Even after hitting the level cap, Aries continued to save my ass time and again. That said, the calamity class monsters I later tamed overpowered Aries even without enhancements, which would leave me slightly discouraged.

Now that I think of it, I've known Aries longer than anyone else in the game. This was before I even met my guild members, and far before we established a nation. I wonder... just what did Aries experience for the past 200 years? Was it fury? Or perhaps, was it grief? Either way, his emotions were enough to drive him to seek revenge. Although I do appreciate the feelings, it's all the more reason to stop him.

Even then, I can't help but wonder who would emerge victorious. In terms of pure strength, Megrez has an edge, but I'm sure Aries wouldn't go down without a fight. Seeing that mankind is on the verge of extinction, I wouldn't be surprised if Aries was plotting something. Fortunately, I'm here to intervene.

"...that sobbing sheep."

My lips formed words on their own. Sobbing sheep? I remember nothing of the sort. The words that rolled off my tongue felt so natural, yet I couldn't recall a single thing.

...no, that's wrong. I know. I remember. The body I reside in still recalls the frail sheep that wished to be strong. Although I did not remember, what still remained of Ruphas continued to cling to this memory.

There's no longer a reason to waver. Ruphas' and my intentions line up perfectly. I will kick Aries back into submission and offer him the same hand I had before.

Don't worry, I would never forget you. Even if I lost my memory or my life, you are the one I would never forget. That's why... I beg you to stop crying, Aries.

---

Orc "..."

Aries: "!?"

Translator's Note: When Ruphas comes to realize that her memories are returning, Ruphas' and our protagonist's voices start to overlap. They start saying the same thing in different ways, showing that both personalities coincide. The reason why I've emitted this is because it would be impossible (or at least really difficult) to mirror this feeling in English. For example, the sentences (which I've emitted from the translation) “俺と共に来いと。余と共に来いと。” (meaning. “Come with me”) are two phrases that say the exact same thing. However, the way they refer to themselves (俺 and 余) allow us to differentiate between them. (俺- ore is more modern, while 余 sounds ancient).

# Chapter 12

## Wild Monsters Suddenly Appeared

Of the wide range of creatures that inhabit Midgard, most of them come under one of the four major categories. Namely, mankind, monsters, demons, and unclassified.

First off, mankind encompasses humans, flugels, dwarves, elves, halflings, vampires, and beastmen—otherwise known as the Seven Great Races. The requirements of being part of this category are, well, completely subjective. Although you could argue all of them are bipedal, so are goblins and orcs. However, due to their low intelligence, they are lumped together with monsters. It's a matter of value, I think.

Which leads us to the next category: monsters. This word refers to all living things altered by mana outside of the Seven Great Races. Such creatures are born from normal animals, which evolve from excess mana intake. Although elves, dwarves, halflings, and beastmen are fabled descendants of magically altered humans, they are by no means monsters. Again, it's difficult to know where to draw the line,

There's little to know about Demonkind. Even within the game, there was but a vague description of the Demon race. Midgard doctrine told of an eighth race of mankind, close relatives of vampires. Despite their magical nature, they are in no way comrades of monsters. However, their superior taming abilities was an important balance to the game.

OK, I take that back. Demon monster tamers were cheaters. A horde of 100 monsters could be treated as a single familiar under a Demon Tamer. [Goblin x 100]? So is it one monster or a hundred? I don't see why summoning [Heavenly Stars x 12] doesn't work the same way?

But I will cut my complaints short, for I have yet to introduce the fourth category: the unclassified. This one's pretty self-explanatory. Creatures that don't fit into any category, such as normal animals, are listed as unclassified. Since livestock and insects had little to do with gameplay, they were all but lumped into a single, vague category. Most resemble the animals of Earth and served an essential addition to X-gate Online's beautiful scenery.

As one would expect, Aries is a monster. But while it's common sense to assume monster tamers tame monsters, the actual skill is pretty diverse. In reality, all hostile NPC's can be turned into familiars—even humanoid ones, like vampires or dark elves. Players who sought after such familiars were commonly known as “human tamers,” often calling bandits and pirates to their aid.

That aside, Aries is an obvious representation of a monster. Although lacking in power, rainbow sheeps are hardly products of nature. Their shimmering coats make them easy to spot, and I have long since known Aries' location. What more could I ask for?

I returned the books to their proper shelves and turned my attention to Dina. She was immersed in the eighth volume of her beloved series, eyes glimmering like a pair of sapphires.

“Huh? You're done with what you came for already?”

“Yeah. I've found most of what I was looking for. Let's go.”

“Go?... Where to?”

“To the castle where Aries is. Lead the way, Dina.”

Dina's spared her light novel a final glance before leaving it on the desk. Soon after she left her seat, we left the library. The time was ripe to finally reclaim my lost pet.

Although I had planned to consult Megrez first, entering the noble district unnoticed has proved too difficult. I can think of plenty of ways to infiltrate the palace, but none are very peaceful. It wouldn't hurt to subdue Aries while I wrack my brain.

“Of course. Once we leave Suvell—”

At my request, Dina describes the castle's location. But her words are cut off by a sudden shaking of the ground, pushing her off balance.

“Woah there.”

I caught Dina in my arms, then quickly retracted them into my overcoat in a single, fluid motion. My movements were too fast to see, and I had checked for onlookers beforehand.

The ground continued to tremble.

Not built to withstand earthquakes, buildings began to visibly sway, creaks of wood and screams following soon after.

Earthquakes, huh? Pretty large ones at that. I'd say around 4 or 5 on the Richter scale.

"These buildings are quite sturdy for their time."

"Ruphas-sama, you're quite composed despite our current situation."

"I'm pretty used to earthquakes."

This is nothing compared to what Japan has to deal with on a daily basis. However, the same can't be said for the residents of this world, their flailing arms only proving my point. I imagine this is what American tourists look like on their first visit to Japan. I stared wistfully, and my inner C\*nan began to flare up.

"Dina, how often do earthquakes occur in Suvell?"

"Rarely, if not never."

"...hmm."

Seldom do earthquakes occur, huh? Which raises suspicions about its origins. Of course, I don't deny the possibility of natural causes, but this violent shaking tugs on my memories...

Right... Aries had the skill to... intentionally cause earthquakes...

As I've touched on before, a familiar can never surpass its tamer in strength. (That's, of course, excluding rare cases of extreme status enhancing.) Naturally, the level cap certainly plays its part, but another obstacle lies in wait: Skill Management.

Although players can learn as many skills as they please, the skills familiars can learn are limited in number. A tamer's total level divided by fifty, to be exact. Then, taking the skills that familiars learn as they level up into account, the number of skills that a tamer can teach their familiars becomes greatly limited.

Returning to the subject at hand, Aries was never a battle-oriented monster to begin



with. In other words, I taught Aries every combat-oriented skill at his disposal. When it comes down to it, I might know his skills better than he does himself.

Aries' fighting style involves harassing opponents with debuffs before dealing a lethal blow. To overcome his shortcomings, Aries' skills rely heavily on luck instead of status, a clever approach if I say so myself.

Even among his diverse skillset, [Earthquake] was among the most versatile of them all. The Area of Effect knocked a significant chunk of agility off its targets, often with a complimentary stun, if the generous gods of RNG willed it. Moreover, flight being a flugel's second nature, [Earthquake] almost never backfired on Ruphas.

"Perhaps, it is a coincidence... but if my suspicions prove correct, then Aries is coming."

"Ruphas-sama, I fear you may be right. I just felt a sudden influx of mana over the... over the Trade District."

"Where Gants is, huh?"

So she can even perceive the flow of mana. I flashed a quick smile at my reliable secretary, then quickly looked over to the Trade District. That's where we parted with Gants. Although the time we spent together was short, he was a rather pleasant old man. I'd rather not see him die this early in the story.

"Ruphas-sama, let's take the monorail back to the Trade District."

"No, that will take too long. Besides, I wouldn't be surprised if it was out of order at a time like this."

"So...?"

"So we're in for a rough ride."

Despite the chaos, I can't remove my overcoat just yet. But how else would I fly? Simple. I'll use something else in place of my wings.

"Let's see... that one looks good."

I caught sight of a collapsed building from the corner of my eye. Shifting my attention to a particularly large chunk of rubble, I began transmuting its surface. The concrete

slowly smoothened itself out, forming a crude vehicle to carry Dina and myself. The finished product was a flat, triangular base around 2 meters wide on all sides.

“Get on. This is how we’ll fly.”

“Um. It doesn’t look too safe.”

“Then you can hold onto my waist.”

I promptly stepped onto the “vehicle” with Dina pressed tightly against my back. Having made sure she was secure, my esper powers whirred to life. And with a telekinetic powered push, the stone slab rose off the ground. Another burst of power shot us into the sky in the direction of the trade district.

Now then, I hope we make it in time...



A tremble of the earth. And a massive influx of mana. Even without these clues, the keen senses that Gants had sharpened over decades of battle screamed in alarm. He knew—he could feel *something dreadful* coming their way.

“Orders! All mercenaries are to prepare for battle at the borders! I repeat, All mercenaries are to prepare for battle at the borders!”

As the messenger boy ran around yelling the orders, the Trade District stirred in excitement. Geographically speaking, the Trade District was the most vulnerable to enemy attack. That’s why mercenaries and soldiers were constantly stationed there to fend off oncoming monsters.

However, the occasional onslaught of monsters never called for the aid of soldiers off duty. The mercenaries of Suvell knew this, and they gathered before the city in a hastily arranged battle formation. Gants, who had just caught wind of his orders, hurriedly prepared for battle and ran over to Suvell’s gates.

“Chief Gants! What the hell is goin’ on!?”

“I’d like to know that myself!”

Gants had bumped into Johnny, a comrade mercenary, along the way. Although neither

of the men knew what was going on, their battle-trained instincts blared in alarm. Today... today was the day they would fight. A fight to defend their country!

“But this atmosphere... you understand, don’t you? This tingling sensation! It’s finally come! The decisive battle!”

“...Aries’ raid on Suvell.”

Some day. Anyone with half a brain knew that some day, Suvell would have to brawl it out with Aries. The war had fallen into a stalemate, but it would not last forever. It was all but certain that some day, Aries would put everything on the line for a chance at victory. And that dreaded “some day” had finally come.

“Commander!”

“Oh, isn’t it Gants!”

By the time Gants arrived at the gates, the border patrol had already formed an orderly battle formation. He quickly greeted the massive man working as the commander. A soldier fighting for his country and a mercenary hired with money locked eyes. Despite their different positions, they were comrades in arms who worked themselves to the bone to defend their country.

“How large is the enemy!?”

The commander handed him a pair of binoculars, quietly implying that it would be faster if he saw for himself. Putting them to his eyes, a glimpse of what looked like hell entered his vision. Mountains of monsters, monsters, and monsters were advancing towards the nation. The massive, unorganized force was slowly making its way to the borders.

“...Well, then. It looks like our visitors are quite serious as well.”

“Yeah, but the question is why now?... Perhaps, there’s a motive? Or maybe he was just in the mood?”

“How am I supposed to know? Maybe it took this long to gather an army of that size or something. More importantly, what are we going to do? Are they telling us to hold *that* back until our main force arrives?”

Gants rested the huge blade of his sword on his shoulder and said in a sarcastic tone. Roughly 500 soldiers and 200 mercenaries guarded Suvell's borders, making a total of 700 warriors. Seven hundred... a trivial number compared to what Gants had seen. Once it arrived, Suvell's main forces posed a chance against that monstrosity. However, whether the National Guard could survive until then was an entirely different question.

"It's unreasonable, but we don't have much of a choice. After all the trouble they went through to greet us beforehand, we'll have to receive them properly, don't we?"

"Huh. So that earthquake earlier was some kind of declaration of war. We have quite some time to spare, seeing how far they are."

There was no need for Aries to declare his arrival with an earthquake. To use it to its fullest potential would be to shake the earth right before his rampage, unnerving the enemy soldiers. However, Aries had done the opposite, signaling his arrival. He would invade the country, but would not resort to surprise attacks... it was a rule that the now deceased Ruphas Mafahl had never failed to follow. *The fellow only resembles his master in the weirdest ways*, thought Gants as he spat on the ground.

"But thanks to that, we're able to prepare ourselves to a certain degree. All magicians to the front! Were going to whittle down their numbers before they get close enough!"

Abiding their orders, the robed figures stepped to the front of the formation. Suvell was the very heart of magic. Not only did the nation house a multitude of magicians, they were almost all first-rate. A barrage of magic from this battalion was no laughing matter.

"Fire!"

Countless flashes of magic fired in unison with the commander's voice. It rained down on the enemy, and signaled the beginning of Suvell's largest battle in its short history of 200 years.

# Chapter 13

## Megrez Unleashes Levia

“Alright! Now we hold out until the main force arrives!”

At their commander’s orders, hundreds of swords unsheathed from the soldiers’ waists. The mercenaries also drew their weapons of choice, kicking the ground. Although the long-distance magic should have shaved off their numbers, the oncoming horde looked no different from before. The army was simply too large for there to be any noticeable difference.

“Aaaaargh!!”

Gants bellowed as he cleaved a nearing monster in half with his enormous battleaxe. His was a name that anyone in the same line of work had heard at least once. A hero of your wallet, that was who he was. Although he may not compare to the Sword Saint, Gants was a top-tier warrior. He could defeat lesser monsters with a swing, and plunge through shields and armor like twigs.

“Come at me, monsters! I’m gonna beat the shit outta you!”

A second swing, and a Howling Wolf was hacked into two parts. A third swing, and the Living Armor behind him was crushed out of shape. A fourth swing, and a diving bird-like monster was knocked from the air, dying on impact.

“Gaaaaaah!!”

He swung, and he swung, and he swung. The mercenary slaughtered any monsters that drew close, and the blood of his ever-increasing victims dyed his body red. In the blink of an eye, a mountain of corpses formed behind him, and it continued to reach for the sky.

“A—amazing! So this is the strength of the man known as the strongest mercenary...”

“What utter power...”

The soldiers' thoughts leaked out in admiration. At both his display of strength, and the immense gap between them. However, despite his unbelievable strength, he was still, in the end, human. The number of monsters was by no means infinite, and his remarkable power pushed them under. Mark my words, he was a ferocious warrior. However, his strength was but a small spark of hope against the might of numbers.

"Aaaaaah!"

"Guh, Johnny!"

Gants' comrade mercenary screamed in agony. A panther-like monster sunk its teeth into Johnny's Adam's apple and tore out his throat. The next moment, the poor soul was swallowed by a wave of monsters.

The battlefield was merciless. Whether you knew them or not, lives were lost all the same. The bright man that Gants chatted with just minutes ago was now a bloodied corpse. It was the harsh reality of the battlefield, something Gants had experienced time and again.

"You! How dare you!"

Wildly swinging his axe, Gants scattered the monsters that had swarmed Johnny. But he was too late. The twisted figure that Gants had glimpsed no longer resembled a human. Soon after, monsters that filled the space trampled upon the corpse, which would continue to disfigure.

"Aaaargh!"

"Eeeek!?"

Cries of pain filled the air, and soldiers continued to fall one by one. Though the enemy's numbers also fell, it barely made a difference. Even now, monsters sprung out from seemingly nowhere, and it was difficult to grasp their numbers.

"Tch!"

A human-sized mantis, an Amberterine, tore through Gants' shoulder with its sickle. Then, he winced in pain as he turned to make a clean cut through the Amberterine's neck. He was wounded physically, but more importantly, the earlier injury dampened his fighting ability. Although the arm still moved, it had undoubtedly weakened.

Especially in a battle that would drag on for who knows how long, the minor cut might as well have been a fatal wound.

“Shit, how much longer will the main force take!?”

Gants cursed as he swung his axe, cutting down the monsters that jumped at him. Just how many minutes had passed, he questioned. How many more minutes would he have to hold out? Five? Ten? Maybe even more? As uneasiness settled in his heart, the mercenary’s movements began to dull. His wounds grew with time and muscles began to tire.

This was the magical country’s shortcoming. Suvell’s abundant mana lured countless mages and sorcerers to its domain. However, the opposite was true for users of magic’s opposing forces. Acolytes and priests who channeled holy power were a rare sight in the magical nation. These scarce numbers could be largely attributed to the fact that flugels, who made up a vast majority of these individuals, found the mana coursing through the country repulsive. In simpler terms, the military lacked healers. They weren’t nonexistent, but their number was definitely insufficient. On the battlefield, it would make for quite the pressing situation.

“Gah!”

Gants sustained another injury to his foot, impairing his mobility. In addition to his fatigue, he could only exert half of his full power at best. The mercenary began to lose heart, and fear overtook him.

Was this as far as he goes?... Was this the end of the line? He could almost see the welcoming smile of his deceased wife, and the beloved figure of the daughter she had left him. Ironically, it was the thought of his clever girl that saved him. She was sure to be in the scholarly district, caught up in her academic endeavors. And so he brandished his axe once more and trained it at the monsters before him.

But before Gants could strike with renewed vigor, an enormous spear of water pierced through the horde.

“Wha—What the!?”

What followed was an incessant downpour of blades of water. Curiously, the liquid weapons curved back into the sky after striking down their targets. Tracing the magical assault back to its origin, Gants... no, every member of the battlefield saw *it*.

The figure loomed in the air, its jaw reaching over a hundred meters in width. Mana-infused water made up its transparent body, and its length ran around the entire Nation of Suvell. As the former lake that enclosed the entire country, it was more than likely to be miles of length. The water dragon conjured by Megrez, one of the seven heroes that overthrew the Black-winged overlord, had finally entered the stage.

Suvell's divine beast bellowed, its roars resounding through the battlefield and shaking the earth. The next moment, hundreds of monsters disappeared into the dragon's jaws.

"The-The Guardian Beast Levia... so the Guardian Deity finally makes its move..."

Riddled with wounds, the commander mumbled in surprise. The warriors of Suvell beheld the magnificent form with similar awestruck expressions. What beauty and dignity that the dragon embodied! This was Suvell's guardian deity, the impregnable defense that would lead them to victory. Just its enormous presence reassured its fellow combatants, instilling conviction back into the warriors' hearts.

"My fellow countrymen, you have done well in your efforts."

The voice that followed was that of another cornerstone to Suvell's defenses. All those who survived the brutal onslaught turned to face the speaker of those words.

There he was, silver hair dancing with the wind. His knowing eyes, housing centuries of knowledge, stared down at the battlefield. Spectacles adorned the beautiful features peculiar to his kind, and a white robe obscured the rest of his body from view. Although his confrontation with the Demon King had rendered his legs useless, his abilities did not wane. Resting on a wheelchair was the regal form of a living legend—the "Wisdom King", Megrez.





“Oh, Lord Megrez! Lord Megrez has come to our aid!”

“The great Wisdom King! Guardian Levia! We’re saved!”

“Hahahaha! That’ll teach them to mess with Suvell!”

Levia tore monsters to shreds one after another, drastically reducing the enemy’s numbers. Unparalleled on the battlefield, the water dragon wreaked havoc across the war front, turning the odds in Suvell’s favor in an instant. The astronomical difference in level was plain to see as the Divine Beast laid waste to the enemy.

However, deluded by their Guardian Deity’s presence, the warriors of Suvell failed to see what else was left in plain sight. Levia was the magical nation’s last line of defense. Its appearance could only mean one thing: that their backs were against the wall... something they were blissfully unaware of.



Why do I feel so... unneeded? By the time Dina and I arrived at the scene, the battle had reached its climax. Telekinesis kept my “vehicle” afloat and overlooking the battlefield.

Levia’s OP.

Two words that summarized the thoughts running through my head as Levia swallowed enemy forces at a terrific pace. And as enormous as it was, physical attacks did little to impede its liquid body. What’s more, Megrez’s constant healing patched up the dragon in all other respects.

Although golems are mostly immune to healing magics, their creators can restore their health through a certain skill. In other words, a golem within the range of a master alchemist is nigh indestructible. Meaning one with 180,000 HP under the constant support of the “Wisdom King” was definitely a force to be reckoned with.

“Oh? Looks like our presence may be unnecessary.”

“So it seems.”

Despite the monstrous force’s overwhelming numbers, each unit averaged at level 50 at best—making them little more than fodder for a certain level 500 dragon’s appetite.

Quality over quantity—was not advice taken to heart while building this army. Most were common monsters with high birth rates, and posed little threat on their own.

Even if Aries were to make an appearance now, Levia may be able to fight him on equal ground. Although the level gap does tip in favor of Aries, Levia makes up for it with her monstrous attributes. The water dragon's tremendous vitality and Megrez's constant support make the Divine Beast more than its level might imply. Above all, Levia's affinity with her opponent was spectacular. After all, Aries was a fire attuned monster, something Megrez evidently came prepared for.

Speaking of Megrez, I might as well take a peek at his status. Although the [Observing Eye] is quite the handy skill to have, it is far from omniscient. Unless your own level is double that of [Observing Eye's] target, only their name and level will be displayed. Furthermore, if the target's level equals or exceeds your own, [Observing Eye] will fail to activate. That said, it never hurts to try.

### 【Megrez】

Level 500

Race: Elf

Class Levels

Mage: 100

Sorcerer: 100

Acolyte: 100

Seeker: 100

Alchemist: 100

HP: 29500

SP: 9400

STR (strength): 980

DEX (dexterity): 1250

VIT (vitality): 1028

INT (intelligence): 5720

AGI (agility): 723

MND (willpower): 4290

LUK (fortune): 1311

【Ill Status Effect】 Lower Body Paralysis

【Ill Status Effect】 Brand of the Vanquished

Much to my surprise, Megrez's full status flashed into vision. My first impression was that he had weakened significantly, and was carrying a few strange status effects at that. Brand of the Vanquished, was it? Lower Body Paralysis was pretty self-explanatory, though.

"Dina."

"Yes, Lord Ruphas?"

"Megrez is carrying a strange status effect called the Brand of the Vanquished. Would you happen to know anything about it?"

I can always consult Dina about any troubling matters. That has always been my easy way out since coming to this world.

"Ah, that would certainly explain those rumors."

"Rumors?"

"Yes. Rumor has it that the Seven Heroes were cursed by the Demon King soon after their defeat."

A curse, huh. Sounds like another pain in the ass.

"Thanks to these restraints, the Seven Heroes are barely able to exhibit even half their original strength. That's why, if Megrez really is bound by a curse, then Levia truly is Suvell's last line of defense."

"...From what I can see, he's been stripped of both half his levels and classes."

"God, that sounds nasty... That would mean Megrez is no longer capable of producing golems of Levia's quality, wouldn't it?"

I shuddered at the thought of hundreds of hours of gameplay disappearing down the drain. What a fearsome curse, that Brand of the Vanquished.

At a glance, Megrez's total level had been halved. His attributes also dropped in a similar fashion. After all, there was no way Megrez, who specialized in support, would have a lower INT attribute than I did. Moreover, half of his classes had vanished from his status. His former Esper and Archer classes were nowhere to be seen. This Brand

of the Vanquished was ridiculous...

“Lord Ruphas, look. He’s coming.”

“Huh? Oh, Aries.”

The very air constricted, threatening to suffocate the living. A staggering presence overtook the battlefield and pressed itself against every inch of my skin. Calmly, I traced it to its source.

In the distance, a dazzling coat of wool shimmered in the sun, scattering majestic rays of multicolored light. The ram reached a hundred odd meters in length, and intense killing intent oozed out of the whites of its eyes. The creature before me looked nothing like the gentle sheep of the past.

Aries of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, my former familiar, shook the earth as he approached the nation of Suvell.

# Chapter 14

## A Wild Aries Appeared

The earth trembled as the enormous ram approached. The air quivered with the roars of a dragon. Both announced the arrival of powers beyond human comprehension, monsters that hailed from the ancient era of heroes. On one side, Megrez's ultimate golem, created at the peak of his power, laid in wait. On the other, a familiar of the Black-winged Overlord rapidly approached. Tension overtook the battlefield as the beasts sized each other up. Yet, Gants and his allies could only stare in a mixture of fright and awe as all hell broke loose.

"Roooooaaaaar!!"

"Baaaaa-a-a-aaah!!"

A war cry. That alone brewed violent winds across the border, sweeping up clouds of ash and dust. Although Megrez held fast during this exchange, drops of sweat glistened on his forehead. He knew—that he was long past his prime. And that if Levia, the masterpiece he had forged at the peak of his power, fell, he would not be able to replace her. More importantly, he could not face Aries alone in his weakened state, and Suvell would surely perish.

If possible, Megrez wanted to refrain from using Levia, as she was the sole reason why Suvell's enemies could never be too careful. Levia's defeat would mean the kingdom's downfall. The elven hero would need to find a way to win this war without losing Suvell's guardian deity.

"...Go!"

At his word, Levia sprung at her opponent, digging her fangs into Aries' body. Considering Levia's elemental advantage, a frontal assault would surely give him an edge, or so he thought.

However, Aries' unyielding expression remained unchanged. It would seem that his heavy woolen coat shielded him from any significant harm.

“Rooaar!”

Aries bit back at the dragon’s abdomen in retaliation. Unsurprisingly, the physical attack did little to harm the liquid construct, and the two beasts sprung apart after the short exchange. Then, they continued to glare at each other from a distance.

“...Ba-a-a-ah”

Aries bleated in frustration, his eyes glinting with insanity. With a shake of his head, the ram’s colorful wool burst into a crimson flame, which sent waves of heat rolling off his body.

[Mesaltim]. That was the name of the flames engulfing Aries’ being. It was a skill once bestowed by the black-winged overlord and sends a continuous stream of damage to those who came in contact. It was also a precious memento of his liege, one he used sparingly against only the most worthy of opponents.

Megrez, at which the flames were directed, winced in recognition.

“...this is going to be difficult.”

The Elven hero erected a barrier at a moment’s notice, shielding his soldiers and nation from harm. Without it, the heat waves alone would have incinerated anyone of inadequate level. However, it left Megrez vulnerable and unable to move.

Releasing the barrier would burn his companions to a crisp. It took the elf all his concentration to maintain his protection, else a stray heat wave could set fire to the nation. He had no choice but to stay grounded where he was.

“Rooooaar!”

“Baa-a-a-aah!”

As the beasts’ blows connected, the earth shifted, raging winds swept the battlefield, and the air shimmered under the intense pressure. Each movement sent fissures through the ground, and small hills were flattened upon impact.

As the two continued to trade blows, the battle began tipping in Levia’s favor. The dragon’s incredible compatibility with her opponent began to show. Rather, this was the sole reason why Levia could bridge the 300 level gap between the combatants.

As if on queue, Levia's next attack sent Aries flying in a large arc into the ground. Again, the earth split and shook. However this time around, Aries was by no means unfazed. The exhaustion was taking its toll, and his body was suffering the consequences.

"Y-you can do it! You can do it Lord Megrez!"

"Victory! Victory will be ours!"

"Long live the Wisdom King! Glory to the Guardian Deity!"

The warriors raised cheers of joy, oblivious of their dire predicament. Right there, right then, they were the ones backed against a wall. They didn't see Megrez furl his brow, barely keeping from cursing aloud.

*Shit... the very water that that makes up Levia's body is evaporating! I can't heal Levia the way things are going!*

Alchemists can repair their creations for as long as their mana pools hold out. However, as Levia's very body vaporized, Megrez was at a loss for words. There was simply nothing left to heal! What's more, magically conjured water couldn't replace Levia's lost biomass. Elements born from mana would inevitably dissipate, returning to the environment once they had served their purpose.

Although the beasts looked evenly matched, nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, Suvell's last line of defense stood on the brink of collapse. Even if Levia managed to grasp victory, the weakened dragon would not live to see another battle. Nevertheless, Megrez had no choice but to rely on the rapidly shrinking dragon.

*Forgive me... Levia!*

As he plead forgiveness from his greatest masterpiece, Megrez gave Levia what would most likely be his final order—to attack.

Would Aries collapse, or would Levia dissipate before then? The odds were against him, and the elven hero had laid his last cards down. Megrez's heart sunk in despair.





wild  
final boss  
appeared!

Illustration: luluako





“What do you think of the performance, Lord Ruphas?”

“Strictly from appearance, Levia has the upper hand. However...”

I began to explain my own outlook to Dina. Currently, Levia holds the upper hand in their bout. The dragon’s elemental advantage sets her attacks worlds apart from what it would have been otherwise. Although I’m unable to see Level 800 Aries’ HP and SP, the ram was visibly battered and bruised. What’s more, Levia’s consistent flurry of blows kept Aries from healing properly. At this rate, the water golem should emerge victorious. However...

### 【Guardian Deity Levia】

Level 500

Race: Artificial Life-form

HP: 103567/103567

“However, Aries will claim victory in the end.”

The dragon’s maximum HP was rapidly shrinking. Aries—that swindling bastard—had not only anticipated this showdown, but also what would come after. By weakening Levia, he would lose the battle, but win the war. Despite the manic glow of his eyes, Aries’ actions were surprisingly rational.

“I see... that would mean...”

“Yeah. Aries never intended to win in the first place. In attempt to lure Levia from the safety of Suvell’s walls, he had gathered enough forces to seem like a final stand.”

I thought something was off. Even if the average quality of monsters had dropped over two centuries, this was absurd.

But Aries’ fight had said it all. Those were disposable troops—bait that served to lure

his prey out of hiding. And Levia had happily bit on to it. Aries had judged Levia too powerful to defeat in one fell swoop, and this little scheme was his solution.

“Aries had planned this retreat, and Megrez is in no condition to recklessly pursue him.”

“...but there’s more to it. Megrez is also afraid that Aries has more monsters at his beck and call. And if in fact he does, the elf’s feet will have to stay planted.”

“Aries is quite a sly one, isn’t he?”

“My Lord Ruphas was the one who taught him military tactics after all.”

It was time I entered the show. With the soldiers’ unwavering attention on the stage, I can’t reveal myself as Ruphas to Aries. Doing so would also pit Levia against me. However, I should be more than enough to push back a battered Aries.

“It’s time, Dina. Hold on tight.”

“Time? You can’t mean we’re flying down there, do you?”

“What else could I mean?”

As soon the words left my lips, the “vehicle” lurched towards the ground. Telekinesis and gravity shot us like a cannonball towards our destination—Aries’ head.

“Aaaaaaaaah!?”

Ignoring the screaming woman clinging to my waist, I sent a flying kick at Aries’ head. I was no stranger to empty-handed combat. Every movement, every tense of muscle was reinforced by 200 combined levels of the Grappler and Champion classes. Passive skills made every limb a deadly weapon, and every swing a deadly encounter.

That’s why I invoked [Blunt Edge], a warrior skill that prevented the opponent’s HP from dropping to zero. Funny thing is, the skill can be applied to weapons without blades, or even no weapon at all.

“!?”

Aries noticed me a second too late. A heavy kick sunk into his face, and the enormous

ram was sent tumbling through the air. The sheep plunged through one mountain, then another, leaving smoldering craters in his wake. When he finally came to a stop a kilometer away, Aries' battered body slackened in exhaustion.

Megrez's jaw dropped, his eyes darting between Aries and my hooded figure in disbelief.

"That was a close one, Wisdom King. Perhaps this passing peddler will lend you a hand."

"D-Dina and Saphur, right?"

"Oh, if it isn't Gants. I'm glad you're alright."

"Ah... Abababa..."

"Though Lady Dina doesn't look so alright..."

Relief washed over me as Gants emerged unharmed. Although shallow wounds riddled his shoulder and foot, those would heal with time. On the other hand, Megrez eyed me with suspicion, which was, of course, the natural reaction. Caution would be advised when dealing with a being capable of striking down a Heavenly Star. However, clearing those doubts would have to wait. I planned to reveal myself to Megrez, but not before we escaped the prying eyes of his countrymen.

"That power... What in the world...?"

"This is not the time, revered Wisdom King. We are being watched, and I have my own... reasons. Understand that you will get your answer later."

"That tone... and that voice... No, it can't be... that can't..."

Megrez was always a sharp one. That said, my condescending tone also gave me away. The arrogance was difficult to suppress, and I decided that it wasn't worth the effort.

I kicked lightly off the ground, leaving Megrez alone to sort out his thoughts. With the help of a Strider skill, [Void-step], I traveled the kilometer to Aries in an instant.

"Who... the fuck... are you...?" Aries sputtered.

Oh, so it talks. I'm guessing all that crazy bleating was in the heat of the moment? Either way, the ram was a sight to see. The brilliant woolen coat and the sheer size of the beast would take any mortal's breath away. It was difficult to believe that Aries' full height barely reached my waist when we first met.

"That," I answered, "is a question I cannot answer at the time. There are plenty of elves serving in that army, and we wouldn't want any rumors spreading, would we? Moving on, I have a single [Order] for you."

"...get out of my wa—"

I invoked [Coercion]. It wasn't enough to render Aries immobile, but it would give the ram a hint to my true persona. Even if he wasn't the brightest tool in the shed, he would at least realize I wasn't an opponent he could defeat in his tattered condition.

"—Guh! Thi-this pressure! No... That's not... Who the hell are you!?"

"This is not the time, nor place. But know that I can give you the answer you're hoping for."

"...!"

The manic glow gradually faded from the ram's eyes. It would seem the gears in his head had finally clicked into place. With a half-suspicious, half-hopeful expression, Aries dragged himself to his feet. The ram slowly turned his back to me, and trod his way back towards the mountain. From time to time, the magical beast turned his head to steal another glance at my direction and smile shyly, just like the old Aries would.

Hm? The old Aries? Well, whatever.

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### 【Some Useless Information】

Familiars played a game of following the leader behind their tamers in the game. Even within cities, familiars stayed faithful to their masters' sides. In terms of this new world of Midgard, Ruphas used to stroll the city streets, a hundred meter ram constantly looming over her shoulder. I wonder what number that did for the overlord's reputation?

# Chapter 15

## The Wild Last Boss' Reunion with the Wisdom King

Now, it is nothing but a fleeting memory.

It was long before Megrez was crowned as the Wisdom King—a time when we were but naive adventurers, bursting with passion. It was a time when elven adventurers were a rare sight, for their kind still enjoyed the seclusion of Midgard's forests. Those who abandoned the shade of the elven canopies were the oddballs and outcasts of the race.

But Megrez ignored the hushed stereotypes placed upon him. Perhaps, he was content with setting foot on new soils and exploring the different facets of Midgard. With every city came new faces to greet and old acquaintances to bid farewell. And perhaps, if he wandered long enough, he would come across another person of the same wavelength.

That was Ruphas.

And every day spent with her was pure bliss.

“—so I thought a wider perspective would do the elven race a lot of good. If only they would open their eyes to the outside world.”

Amidst a grimy tavern, Megrez told his dream to those gathered around a table. By no means was it a classy pub, and its alcohol was no better. But *she* was what made it special.

Ruphas sat, legs crossed, eyes sparkling with excitement. His dearest friend grinned from ear to ear, releasing one hearty laugh after another. It was at these times that everyone was within arms reach, unshackled by their own differences.

“That's why, someday, I'll make a country where elves can walk hand in hand with the other races. It'll be a bustling metropolitan, and I'll prove that it's possible!”

“Hoho! I see we have some big dreamers here!”

“Hahaha! Isn’t that right! Men need dreams! And if you’re gonna dream, you go big or go home!”

The smithing and sword kings’ goofy smiles were contagious, and soon enough, everyone was laughing along. Ruphas herself grinned, standing up with a mug of beer in hand.

“Naive, Megez! While you found your country, I’ll rule the world! I’ll build a paradise where no one has to fear the demon race!”

This time around, the group roared with laughter. Ruphas’ expression flushed red with embarrassment and opened her mouth to speak.

“Wha—what’s so funny!? I’m dead serious! I’ll show you all someday!”

“Gahahaha! Even dreams need limits! The day you rule the world is the day I slurp pasta through my nose!”

“I’ll hold you to that, Alioth! You’ll see! Once I rule the world, I’ll make sure you keep that promise! He-hey! Not you too, Megrez!”

Those were blissful days, full of banter, quarrels, and reconciliations. However, such merry times would soon come to an end, for these youngsters had the potential to realize their dreams. And once they did, they would slowly lose themselves.

Where did we go wrong? Where... when did we stray from the right path?

Ruphas, my old friend... perhaps you knew the answer?



After Aries’ retreat, I was promptly invited to the noble district. Hundreds of soldiers lined the bridges that led to the heart of the nation. Each stood with stonelike serenity, and were in no hurry to leave despite the obvious peril of the situation.

Although heartless, it was a rational decision. While Gants and company bought time,

the main force prepared to receive the enemy. Indeed, the imperial castle is the lifeline of the nation, something to be guarded at all costs.

However, such rationality would cost the lives of warriors prepared to die for their country—warriors who would die believing that reinforcements would come... Then again, perhaps it is not my place to judge.

As you can imagine, the noble district was a sight for sore eyes. The developing nation was already beautiful, but the central island brought extravagance to a new level. Stately mansions stood at every corner, giving the island an undeniable air of class. Even the people dressed lavishly and carried themselves with the dignified poise of nobility, as if completely unfazed by their collapsing borders.

I, too, wore a dress under my overcoat. Perhaps, in time, I would transmute some more casual attire.

The castle was a sight to behold as well. The royal abode resembled France's Château de Chambord, albeit a little larger than the original. What's more, the combination of blue and white only added to the castle's grandeur.

As we drew closer to Suvell's centerpiece, the castle guards shot puzzled glances in my direction, but didn't move a muscle as I followed Megrez through the castle gates.

"Oh! If it isn't Lord Megrez! I was so worried!"

"I was troubled when you left the castle alone... Well, what's important is that you're safe."

Upon entering the castle, the elven hero was greeted by a pair of portly men clothed in gaudy attire. They looked like orcs dressed in clothes—awkward and out of place. I had to remind myself that obesity was often a symbol of wealth, not telltale signs of corrupt nobles.

"However, I must remind my lord to show more restraint. After all, my lord and Levia are irreplaceable assets to this nation."

"My thoughts exactly. You are many times more important than the lives of the Trade District."

They were corrupt nobles. Although sickeningly sweet words spilled from their lips,



not a single tinge of emotion stood behind them. The only motivation behind their flattery was the selfish concern for their own lives. In other words, “our protection takes priority over that of the common folk.”

“I am just so relieved you’re alive.”

“Absolutely. This nation still needs you. Ha, ha, ha.”

Barely sparing the babbling pigs a glance, Megrez continued on his way. Dina and I followed closely behind, exiting the castle from the rear entrance. There, an estate stood separate from the grand monument behind us. I guess that’s how he liked it—away from the squabble of nobles.

“Hilarious, isn’t it? Those are the kind of men who run the country. Selfish, death-fearing bastards, who only know to suck up to their superiors.”

“...So this is what you wanted to show me.”

“Yeah. I wanted to show you my failures.”

Upon entering the estate, a butler offered to take my overcoat, which I politely declined. He sighed dejectedly, handed Megrez a pair of crutches, then pushed the discarded wheelchair out of view. Once the elf had settled in, we made our way to the guest room.

“It’s fine now, isn’t it? I’m the only one watching so... would you show me your face?”

“Ah, very well.”

At Megrez’s request, I undid the buttons of my overcoat. Slowly, I slipped the garment off, revealing a pair of fully unfurled wings. Words cannot express the sense of release as I extended limbs once restricted by my mantle. To be honest, it was cramped, that overcoat. It’s nice to stretch my wings every once in a while.

“So it was you... Ruphas.”

“Yeah. It’s been a while, my old friend.”

I guess that’s one thing off my chest. Now to see if whether he is a “player” like me. After all, in times of need, it’s great to have a shoulder to lean on.

But deep down, I already knew. A player would never look at me with eyes like those. What I saw was not joy, delight, or even nostalgia. No, it was fear and regret—as if he was silently apologizing. It was the kind of shameful gaze a child would cast a parent, after shattering a plate against the ground.

A player would have no reason to fear me, no reason to regret. That betrayal was staged, an act, and no hard feelings passed between the two sides. Only a resident of this world could feel such emotion towards a roleplayed performance.

But I see now... that you, too, are a resident of this world, Megrez.

“...So you, too, look at me with those eyes.”

So in the end, I am still alone. What... a letdown.



“...So you, too, look at me with those eyes.”

Ruphas’ words carried a forlorn quality to them—a quality that made Megrez avert his gaze. It frightened him, that his deepest emotions could be revealed at a single glance.

“You, are not the Megrez I knew.”

“...People change, Ruphas. The tides turn with time, and I have become weak... both physically and mentally.”

Back then, it was different. 200 years ago, *they* were different. They were hot-blooded adventurers who explored places others could only dream of. Each had dreams to follow, ambitions to achieve, and ideals to realize.

But it was different now. Now, they were tied down by the harsh obligations of reality. What once housed passionate ambitions was replaced with the empty husk of regret and resignation.

“Say, Ruphas, why did you choose now to return? Was it to laugh at how far we’ve fallen?”

“To be honest, it was a complete coincidence. In a faulty attempt to summon a hero, I

was called back to this world. That was all.”

It was from this exchange that Megrez realized how much he dreaded Ruphas’ condemning words. However, in some dark corner of his heart, he secretly hoped to be reprimanded.

Two hundred years ago, he opposed and overthrew Ruphas’ rule. He used to think it was the right thing to do. However, he was quickly proven wrong, as the overlord’s downfall brought the crumble of humanity, and a new era of demonkind.

Even the nation that he dreamed of amounted to a state headed by corrupt officials—nobles who wouldn’t lift a finger for the lives of the common folk. As such, it became difficult to tell who was in the right. Now, if he had the choice, Megrez would much rather live under Ruphas’ rule than watch his dreams distort into hideous husks of their former selves.

Ultimately, they committed a pointless betrayal, achieving naught but setting mankind on the road to extinction. Who were they to call themselves heroes? Who was he—the pile of regret that he was—to call himself a sovereign of wisdom?

“I’ve seen your nation’s libraries.”

“...”

“There are quite a number of volumes that harshly criticize the seven heroes. It is hardly a healthy topic during the critical state that your nation is facing. You’re the one... collecting them, aren’t you?”

Megrez was at a loss for words. But at times, silence is an answer. Here, it was a quiet confirmation.

“I see that you, too, have suffered through a lot. You begin to seek slander in place of praise, and scorn in place of reverence.”

“That is...”

“The constant cycle of envy and esteem has become suffocating, has it not? Even as your knees buckle under the crushing weight of self-doubt, your revered position forbids you from venting your frustrations. Your precious honor... has become a double edged sword, no?”

Again, Megrez's lips failed to form words. Each of her words struck with pinpoint precision, leaving him nothing to say in return. It was an odd exchange. While the victor toiled in fear and regret, the vanquished stood with the same dignity she had two centuries ago.

"Although the Megrez I knew is long gone, you burden yourself with his hardships. What is the point? Take pride in your victory. Hold your head high in knowing that you have conquered the unconquerable—defeated the undefeatable. And yet, you shrink in shame, regretting a footnote in history you cannot change... And what will become of me? If even my conqueror drowns in his own self-pity?"

Satisfied with her lines, Ruphas donned her overcoat once again. Jet black wings and her gorgeous appearance returned under the guise of her garments. Unease settled into Megrez's heart as Ruphas' expression retreated into the privacy of her hood. Was she disgusted? Disappointed? Or perhaps, did she sneer from the concealment of her hood?

"There is nothing to be ashamed of. Do not concern yourself with historians who criticize men of the past. They are hypocrites—nobodies who have never shouldered the burden of humanity, yet think that they could have done a better job. Instead, continue doing what you think is right... At least, that is what the Megrez I knew would have done."

Ruphas' words strayed far from Megrez's expectations. However, from the steady resolution of her voice, one thing was painfully obvious: This woman didn't regret a single one of her actions. Not the war, not the betrayal, not even the defeat. She may even take pride in inciting revolution. The woman he admired hadn't changed in the slightest.

"...Are you... comforting me? Thank you for that."

"No need. You were making quite the pitiful expression, so I thought I'd give you some advice."

With that, Ruphas turned to leave the room. Most likely, she would never return to this wretched place. She had places to go, things to be done. And if that was the case, this was no time to be overwhelmed by emotion. Megrez steeled himself.

"Ruphas."

“Hm?”

“I’ll accompany you to the exit. It’s the least I can do.”

Leaning heavily on his cane, Megrez hobbled to Ruphas’ side. It was times like these that reminded him of simpler times. A time when they were just adventurers—nothing more and nothing less.

“...There’s someone pulling the strings behind Aries’ actions.”

“What?”

“Although Aries is leading the invasion, someone is using his emotions to their own advantage. You probably don’t need me to tell you this, but... be careful.”

“I’d like to remind you who you’re talking to, but it’s been a while since I saw you. I’ll keep that in mind, old pal.”

It was like nothing had changed. However, Megrez knew it to be nothing but an illusion. He had changed, and there was nothing he could do but watch as the crones weaved their fates apart. So as Ruphas waved a hand in farewell, Megrez could only watch as her back grew smaller in the horizon.

They were two friends pulled apart by the wear of time. Megrez was no longer the companion that Ruphas came to know, but a traitor who continued to drown in meaningless regret. It was as if an unbreachable chasm had opened up between two long lost friends.

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Ruphas: “It’s pasta. Eat up. (through your nose)”

Alioth: “.....”

**【Something I should explain】**

The sum of a player’s class levels equates to the level cap. In other words, the sum of Ruphas’ class levels at level 1000 is 1000. While it was possible for Ruphas to raise a class level to 200, it would reduce the number of classes available to her.

## 【Aries' Size】

Aries' initial size was that of a normal sheep, but due to Ruphas' constant buffing, Aries grew to his monstrous 100 meter length.

Pigs wearing clothes → Orcs?

# Chapter 16

## The Demon Race's Hula Dance

Gale Volcano. Standing at one thousand meters above sea level, it lies twenty kilometers away from Suvell. Although reportedly an active volcano, it has laid dormant for centuries past.

At the foot of the natural monument stood an equally impressive castle, which was teeming with monsters. However, Aries' titanic form was nowhere to be seen, and by no means could his huge build enter the narrow confines of the fortress. It was but an object of pride, as the throne sat empty in the center of the estate.

But if Aries truly wished, entering the castle was a simple matter. Thanks to his tamer's skills, the ram was granted a temporary humanoid form. With it, assuming the throne would be a walk in the park. However, Aries had no intention of taking a human form. In his crazed hunger for revenge, he was sure it would be an unsightly appearance. And he did not dare to taint the elegant form handed down by his lord and master... for the span of two centuries, not once had Aries walked on two legs.

"Aries"

A voice called out to the ancient familiar lying beside the castle. It was the clear voice of a young boy, towards which Aries shot a sharp gaze of annoyance. The lad barely reached five feet, a size that Aries' hundred meter form could easily overlook. Yet, he had the nerve to grin at the ram. Aries exhaled, sighing through his nose.

"What do you want?"

"Oho? May I not speak with you when there is nothing I desire?"

Except for the blue hue of the boy's skin, he looked almost human. That is, if you ignored the reversed colors of his pupils and his whites. And, oh, the fangs that peeked out from under his upper lip, which proved him completely inhuman. In reality, he was of a race of people that drove mankind to a corner—a member of demonkind.

"First, let me congratulate you. With this, Levia has greatly weakened... I'm sure

victory will be yours on your next attack.”

“...That goes without saying.”

“Then why have you slept for days on end without making a single move? Just a little more and Suvell will crumble. What are you waiting for?”

As if he was an old friend, the demon boy offered an outlet to Aries’ worries. However, the dangerous glint in his eyes said otherwise. Despite his caring words, his eyes remained devoid of emotion.

“No, not just this time. For these past few years, you could have crushed Suvell whenever you wanted. Yet you’ve left them unscathed for years. Why is that?”

“...”

“Don’t tell me you’re hesitating, are you? They’re the ones who betrayed your master.”

“...I haven’t forgotten.”

Aries was wavering. That was the indisputable truth. But it wasn’t about killing the seven heroes, no. If they had been average warriors, he would have slaughtered them without a second thought. But that was where the problem lied. Each hero played a pivotal role to humanity’s defenses. With the collapse of every sequential nation, demonkind took one step closer to world domination.

And that was something his lord would never wish upon Midgard. As someone who hoped most to rid mankind of its fear of demons, the Black-Winged Overlord was not one to topple nations for some petty revenge. And a revenge that tainted his lord’s memory would be no revenge at all. But even then...

He would not forget—He refused to forget the fleeting moments he spent with his precious lord and savior. And the incredible rage he felt towards those who stole her warmth away from him.

“I don’t need you to tell me... I *will* kill Megrez. I was only waiting for my wounds to heal.”

“I see, I see. I’m glad to hear it. So I’m guessing you’re raring to go?”



“...Yeah. I can barely contain myself.”

He had his doubts. However, as long as Megrez—no, even one of those seven “heroes” remained, Aries will not have avenged his master. Whether his actions led to the world’s collapse was none of his concern. This was the only way he could appease the rage and grief from having his lord stolen away.

Giving into rage once more, Aries lifted his enormous frame from the ground. This time around, Levia would not survive the encounter. Nevermind Megrez, who was far from the peak of his power.

“Well, no sense in waiting. My monsters have *been* ready. Of course, they’re nothing like last time’s fodder. I’ve got monsters and wyverns who’ve all broken level 80. Not even that sword saint will last ten minutes against this bunch.”

“...Sounds like a bunch of small fry to me.”

“Oh be a bit more lenient, will you? Most all monsters are weak compared to *you*.”

The horde’s presence made little difference to a monster of Aries’ caliber. Over the past two centuries, mankind wasn’t the only one to lose their once great fighting prowess.

Despite demonkind’s claim to victory, by no means was their kind free from casualties. While mankind lost their heroes to war, the greatest of demon nobles perished in battle. Likewise, powerful monsters were exploited as tools of war, driving many to the brink of extinction.

The odds had been just as likely to tip in mankind’s favor as it was to demonkind. Both sides of the war had an even chance at victory. And that... that was unforgivable.

If only his liege had lived to fight the war, victory would not have been a prospect.

It would have been a certainty.

The demon filth would have been purged from Midgard’s soil, and the world born anew, free from fear of their kind. It would only be right.

So who was to blame for mankind’s demise? Who had beckoned to the world’s ruin? Was it the gods, who abandoned humanity to its downfall? Was it his lord, who unified

all of mankind? Or was it the simple murderers, who were worshiped as heroes, and still lived unpunished to this day?

He *would* kill them.

His only concern was...

The anomaly in the red overcoat. He reminded Aries of his late master, and it wrought an odd mixture of fear and hope in Aries' broken heart.



"Heh... Suvell will finally fall to its ruin. Surely the Demon King will rejoice! Another of the foolish seven heroes will soon meet his maker."

The demon boy—one of the Demon King's "Seven Ferii"—chuckled at his impending success. At last, Mars could present the Demon King with the head of a hero. With this, the other six would realize how worthy he was to be the King's aide.

Two centuries had lapsed since the age of heroes, and the devious masterminds of the time had lost their lives. It was about time for new leaders of demonkind to rise to glory and the Seven Ferii were assembled under that mindset. However, they lacked actual achievements to back their positions. But this—this was it. With this final victory, he would earn the Demon King's trust.

At first, the conquest of Suvell seemed all too ambitious. To say nothing of Megrez himself, Levia posed quite the challenge. "Difficult" was a generous word when it came to finding someone willing to challenge a tireless water dragon impervious to physical attacks. The addition of Levia's regenerative powers and titanic size was of little help.

However, Lady Luck stood firmly by his side. The moment Mars found Aries by Gale Volcano, he was sure her holiness Alovenas was watching from above. So he invested years into nourishing a desire for revenge in a wavering Aries, which was by no means an easy task.

But soon, he would be rewarded for his hard work. To convince a pillar of the Twelve Heavenly Stars to turn on his former allies... How devious! How cunning!

Show me, vengeful ram! The face of despair as mankind falls to ruin!

“What bothers me is that red overcoat... Aries was off-guard, but anyone who can send Aries flying is nothing to sneeze at...”

Well, Mars was sure the guy was no match for Aries. But with Levia’s and Megrez’s help, he was no longer so confident of the ram’s victory. While he *did* have the army of monsters, he wasn’t sure if they would help against such monsters of opponents.

“Well, worst case scenario, I’ll just make an appearance myself.”

Mars crossed his arms and watched the horde march for the war front. Surely, he had the upper hand. As long as he proceeded carefully, victory was certain. He could almost see Megrez’s despairing expression as his kingdom crumbled around him.

Soon, he would become an object of envy to his fellow Ferii. Good things truly did come to those who wait. Mars smiled at the thought—

—And hundreds of monsters were suddenly sent flying, wiping the smug grin right off his face.

“...The-the fuck!?”

Mars leaned out of the castle window for a better look. What? What just happened? Could Megrez have come himself? With a demon’s excellent eyesight, he scanned the point of impact. And then he saw it.

Approaching on foot was a figure in that dreaded crimson overcoat.

“That’s...!”

It was that fucking anomaly again! How dare he stand in his way! No... he needed to calm down. This was a chance—yes, a chance! If he took care of that red bitch now, Megrez and Levia would have to hold the front alone. If worse came to worst, Mars, Aries, and a couple higher ranked monsters could conquer Suvell themselves. It didn’t matter how many sacrifices he had to make. He *would* take this fucker down.

“Don’t falter! There’s only one enemy!”

Mars barked words of encouragement, spurring his army into action. Monsters surged forward to face a single enemy. No matter how strong a foe, he was, in the end, mortal. No amount of strength could overcome the might of overwhelming numbers.

Or so he thought as tens—no, hundreds of swords tore his army to shreds. Scores of monsters fell victim to the blades, yet not a single one came close to the crimson warrior. Even as the corpses reached the hundreds, his horde inched no closer to their foe.

Yet, the furious onslaught showed no signs of slowing. It wasn't until the army recoiled did the warrior pause to admire his handiwork. More than five hundred corpses laid at his feet, a tribute to strength that surpassed the might of numbers.

“...who the fuck...”

Absurd... This was absurd! It was as if the heroes of legend had returned! Perhaps, was he another of the seven heroes? No... the Heavenly King was renown for his hatred of mana, and the Vampire Princess was not one to help others.

He was not a hero of the rebellion, yet the red warrior was a force to be reckoned with. Seeing his attacks as both a waste of effort and soldiers, Mars ordered his army to withdraw. He would dance with the warrior himself.

“...A demonkin, huh?”

“It is as you say. And you are? To think that warriors of your caliber still existed...” Mars said, as he unsheathed a pair of daggers.

On his right, he held a blade of fire. On his left, he gripped a blade of ice. Ice to seal his enemies' movements and fire to burn them to a charred corpse. Such a sudden change in temperature rendered all things brittle to the touch, fit for Mars to crush under his heel like an aluminum can.

“You've done well to come so far, but your winning streak has come to an end. You see, those who oppose the Demon King don't live long. You only have yourself to blame for meeting such an unfortunate end.”

Mars lunged forward. Using his body's light build, the demon reached speeds difficult for the eye to follow. Each pivot left yet another afterimage as he froze his enemy, restricting their movements. This was the source of his pride, a technique not a single victim had survived. It was his ultimate, sure-kill attack.

“Behold! The secret technique of one of the Seven Ferii! The Fire-Ice Doubleplay! As I rob you of your mobility then your life, it is the last, greatest thing you'll witness.

Raging hellfires shall send you to your death! But do not fret. The pain will only last an instant, and that is the last mercy I grant you. Rather, you should be grateful! Grateful for the salvation I grant you! Life is but a struggle for—”

“Shut up.”



—the next moment, Mars was knocked into the air, his mind unable to register what had transpired. He understood but one thing: the unfathomable power that sent him flying.

“...No... Way...”

Something ruptured inside him, and blood gushed from his mouth. What... just happened? Even the seven heroes could not thrash him so...

—Mars’ eyes widened in realization. Of the five hundred monsters he had thrown at the warrior, not a single one was dead! While unconscious, none suffered from fatal wounds. That meant the crimson warrior had the leeway to hold back against these overwhelming numbers. Not only were the transmuted blades dulled, he made sure to miss every vital point!

“Wh-who... the fuck... are you...”

As if to answer his inquiry, jet-black wings entered his fading field of vision. Mars could only stare in awe as they unfurled to their full span, revealing ruby eyes and locks of golden hair. She was too beautiful a bringer of death and too lovely a ruthless overlord. She was without a doubt...

“Ru... Ruphas... Ruphas Mafahl...!?”

Standing before him was the black-winged overlord even the Demon King so reluctantly feared. And Mars knew—that he had challenged the impossible.

# Chapter 17

## Aries, Get!

With the clasp of the cloak removed, the wings spread. A sense of release surged through my whole body. It felt terrible to have one's own wings binding oneself. Or rather, anyone who enjoyed it must be truly disgusting.

Well, while I was saying this, I was sending everyone around me flying. This was the guy whom Megrez said was manipulating Aries, right?

...Ah, he was one of the Seven Luminaries or something.

"Seven Luminaries... Uh, I never heard of them."

"Let me explain!"

Dina teleported next to me the moment I finished my sentence.

*Hm. Well, it would be really helpful, but has exposition become your hobby recently?*

"The Seven Luminaries are the generals among demons. The group was formed eighty years ago. Beside the Demon King and his son, they could be considered to be the most powerful demons today."

"...Are they only this strong? He seems to be only around Level 300 or so."

"This is because of the drop in power across the demon race. Although humans lost the war against the demons, the demons were severely weakened as well. Most of the powerful demons died in the war. Otherwise, the world would have been destroyed long ago."

*Ah. I see. I finally understand.*

I had been wondering how humans maintained the power balance against the demons. Now that I thought about it, the assumption that demons were as powerful



as before was wrong to begin with. There were high-level and mid-level players in this world as well. After that devastating war, it would be weird if the other side remained unhurt.

*Hm? Am I the only one left in this world that could oppose the Demon King?*

"By the way, Ruphas-sama, aren't you going for the finishing blow? It looks like you didn't even kill a single monster."

"Hm? Oh... About that, I don't have the interest to kill monsters that were being manipulated. My enemy is still the demon race."

I said as I shook my finger lightly. Then, the swords that scattered the monsters all over the place suddenly vanished. This was the decomposition of alchemical creations.

"What should we do with these monsters? After losing their master, they should return to the wilds, but then they may start attacking people."

"I have a solution... Capture!"

I activated the monster tamer's basic skill, Capture. There was a certain amount of chance that the monster tamer could capture monsters which were unable to move or whose hit points were below a certain amount. The amount one could capture and the success rate increased along with skill level.

I could capture ten monsters in one go. At this rate, I would need to repeat fifty times, but it was worth a try. This was impossible in the game, but the enemy accomplished it as a matter of fact.

That Mars guy should be controlling the monsters with monster tamer skills like me. If he could do it, then I should be able to do the same. Since this was not a game, there would be no excuses like "It would break game balance, so only enemies could use it."

In other words, these monsters were not considered as individuals, but rather as a group.

### **Mixed Monster Army**

Level: ■■

Race: ■■

HP: ■■■■

SP: ■■■■

STR (Strength): ■■■

DEX (Dexterity): ■■■

VIT (Vitality): ■■■

INT (Intelligence): ■■■

AGI (Agility): ■■■

MND (Mind): ■■■

LUK (Luck): ■■■

Well, it was successful, but what was this?

Was the display bugged? Was it because the individual statuses were different, so it could not be displayed?

It was impossible to tell how strong they were. However, the capture was successful, and I had a sense of control over these monsters. Therefore, I merely had to command them to return to their original locations and not attack people.

I had no intention of bringing them along, as they would attract too much attention.

"Then, you are the only one left—Aries."

I narrowed my eyes... and turned to Aries, who was staring at me. He had a shocked expression, as if he could not believe what he had seen.

Well~ I could understand his feelings. Someone who died two hundred years ago appeared alive out of nowhere. There would be an urge to say, "You still have the cheek to come back."

But I just pretended that I didn't care and came close to Aries.

"Well, Aries. Can you not believe what you are seeing? Or do you suspect I'm merely someone who looks similar?"

"...Ru... phas...!"

Then, what would Aries do? It would be nice if he acted maturely.

If he shouted "Impostor!", it would be rather troublesome. To be honest, I was not good at convincing others with words. Even if my Intelligence status value was high, that merely represented mnemonic ability and awareness, it did not represent imagination or tactfulness. In other words, although I had photographic memory, it did not make me quick-witted.

"This can't be right... Ruphas-sama should be dead... This... is an illusion..."

"It's not an illusion."

Well, personally I had some doubts about whether I was really Ruphas herself. But this body was truly Ruphas, and part of her consciousness remained within. Therefore, I was Ruphas Mafahl. I had no evidence, but something made me feel this way, so I could make this declaration.

"I am indeed Ruphas Mafahl. I'm neither someone who merely looks similar nor a doppelganger, neither an illusion nor a spiritual being. If you still can't believe it... why not confirm it with your own body?"

I said as I cracked my knuckles. The best evidence to prove Ruphas' identity was her strength. Facial features, wings, and mannerisms could all be mimicked, but strength alone could not be imitated.

I beckoned Aries with my finger, inviting him over.

"Come at me, Aries. Show me your growth in the past two hundred years. Meanwhile, you could also confirm if I'm truly Ruphas."

"Ah—Ahhh!!"

Aries got fired up and gave a cry as if of delight. The air vibrated with his cry, sending goosebumps on one's skin as a witness to his power. I was not a battle maniac. I never seriously quarreled or raged at another person, and never would. Ah, but what was this anticipation?

Currently, I was definitely anticipating this battle. Since I arrived in this world, this was the first time I truly craved a fight.

"Ahhh!"

Aries lunged suddenly, taking advantage of his weight. Normally, this would be a scary sight, yet I merely smiled. This was like a lost puppy jumping into the embrace of its master... I felt a sense of something like this from Aries. Then, there was only one action to take.

"Hm. You still have not changed your habit of being spoiled after two hundred years. In that case, let me give you a hug."

I flew into the sky and reached one hand forward. At the same time, I took on Aries' head-butt, putting considerable stress on my arm. After an explosive sound rang out, my body was pushed backwards. It was impossible to stop the recoil in mid-air with one's feet. However, the sky was the flügel's battlefield. I spread my wings and pushed forward, stopping Aries' attack. Furthermore, I placed both hands on his head and forcefully pushed him back.

"How cute."

This was ridiculous to see a monstrous sheep of over one hundred meters as a fawning puppy. Or was it that a cute puppy remained cute even after it grew into a big dog? Either way, it seemed I just could not dislike him. Even though his form was like this, it was inevitable when skinship was taken to its extreme.

"Ha!"

I strengthened my arms and lifted Aries up, as if raising a pet up high and tossing it lightly. The enormous sheep danced in the air before hitting the ground, triggering the largest earthquake for today.

But this was not enough. It wouldn't end merely with this. Right, Aries?

"Make your next move, Aries. No need to hold back, give it your all."

As I provoked him, Aries made an indescribable roar. The wool on his body stood on ends. His body was transformed into rainbow-colored flames. This was what threatened Levia previously, his ultimate skill—Mesarthim.

It was easy to defend against it... Well, I would take it head-on here.

"Meh—!!!"

This time, I used both hands to suppressed the charging Aries, who had become a raging flame. My palms felt a burning sensation as heat like that of a midsummer assaulted me.

*Hm. I see.*

Even though I directly touched this lump of fire, subjectively, it felt merely like the summer's heat. I deeply understood my own unreasonable abilities. Even so, hot things were still hot. There was almost no damage, but if this persisted, there was the possibility of suffering a heat stroke. In that case, it was better to separate quickly.

"Hot."

I tossed Aries again towards the ground.

*If you are finished with all your moves, it's my turn.*

Aries was still shrouded in flames, but it was merely like summer heat to me. There was no feeling of lethargy as one might feel during summer. I was moving normally. In other words, there was practically no effect.

"Oh right... I should pet you a little."

I flew to the crown of Aries' head, and proceeded with my "petting". And so Aries' head kissed the ground once more, and vigorously bounced back up. I placed my hands beneath Aries' chin as if stroking it, and jumped up. Then, I flipped Aries over, and stroked his belly. Well, it was stroking, but there was enough force to crush the ground beneath Aries.

"Well, how is it? Can you still now believe me, Aries?"

"Hm, hm, hm..."

I asked Aries as he got on his feet. He was groaning softly.

*It looks like I need to give him a little more love, huh?*

As I thought this, my body received an unexpected charge. Aries' body suddenly shrank and dashed into my embrace.

"Ahh! I'm sorry, Ruphas-sama!!"



I was stunned by the sudden turn of events as... uh, this person, possibly Aries, was hugging me and crying like a baby. He was shorter than me, probably around one hundred fifty-five to one hundred sixty centimeters tall. His long hair reached his waist, and its color... What was this? Its color changed according the degree of one's perspective.

His limbs were thin, and his body was covered in a white robe. No, when he changed into humanoid form, he was naked. But at the moment of his transformation, Dina teleported behind him and covered him with the robe. Looking over, I saw Dina had a look of self-satisfaction on her face.

*You... You are faster than the Twelve Heavenly Stars?*

But still, this... Certainly, as I remembered, a monster tamer's familiar had the personification skill. And indeed, Aries did have a humanoid form.

—Mizar once said, "Traps are popular nowadays." As a result, I subconsciously designed his appearance to look like a girl as a prank of sorts. Because of this, Aries' humanoid form became something of a gender fraud. This was a mistake of my past. Damned that Mizar.

By the way, did Aries' personality change? Where was the earlier sense of intimidation? Or perhaps this was his normal state, and his previous state was abnormal?

In any case, I needed to peel Aries off me... Ugh! His snot was all over me!?

"Ah, seriously. Stop crying, stop crying. It has been two hundred years and you are still a crybaby."

"But, but... ugh... wah!"

"Ah! I understand, I understand! I'm sorry I made you worried, so stop crying."

In the end, I spent over twenty minutes trying to calm this child who wouldn't stop crying. By the way, Dina got bored after five minutes and left for parts unknown.

*Are you really my adviser?!*



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## ※ Author's Notes

Translator: There is also an author's note about Mars rambling on meaninglessly, while Ruphas asked him what he was talking about... It's too long and nonsensical to translate, so whatever.

## ※ Foot Notes

**Megrez**, also called Delta Ursae Majoris, is a star in the constellation of Ursa Major. It is also the dimmest of the seven stars in the Big Dipper asterism. In this novel, all the seven heroes are named after stars in the Big Dipper, with Megrez being the elf known as the Wisdom King.

**Seven Luminaries** (七曜) are the celestial objects used to name the seven days of the week in East Asian tradition, specifically Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. The five planets are also associated with the Five Elements.

**Flügel** means "wing" in German, and is used in *No Game No Life* light novel series for the angel-like beings whose race is given as 天翼種 (literally, "sky-wing species"). In this novel, Ruphas' race is given as 天翼族 (literally, "sky-wing tribe"). Given the similarity in names ("sky-wing"), the word *flügel* will be used in this translation as well. Later in this novel, it will be revealed that some believed them to be descended from angels, so a distinction must be made between the "sky-wing tribe" and the angels.

**Mesarthim**, also called Gamma Arietis, is a binary star in the constellation of Aries. In this novel, the skills of the Twelve Heavenly Stars are named after stars within their own constellations.

**Mizar**, also called Zeta Ursae Majoris, is star in the constellation of Ursa Major and the Big Dipper asterism. In this novel, Mizar is the dwarf known as the Smith King.

# Chapter 18

## More Companions For The Next Trip

After a few minutes, Aries finally stopped crying. Since he was no longer crying like a baby, it should be possible to converse with him now. But before that, since Aries had once more become my familiar, I could now view his status window. I needed to check his abilities.

### **Twelve Heavenly Stars, Aries**

Level: 800

Race: Rainbow Sheep

Attribute: Fire

HP: 75,000

SP: 7,600

STR (Strength): 4,100

DEX (Dexterity): 4,000

VIT (Vitality): 4,050

INT (Intelligence): 4,300

AGI (Agility): 4,170

MND (Mind): 4,294

LUK (Luck): 4,180

Hm... His values were higher than I remembered.

His HP used to be 68,000. He had obviously grown. This guy had been working hard for the past two hundred years. Even so, his values were still very average. This was due to my all-rounded training that resulted in his overall average values.

By the way, these values were the result of using ability boosts. Without ability boosts, his status values would be around 1,000 to 1,500. This guy was a production-oriented monster, and not a combat-oriented one. Frankly, his true purpose was to produce wool, and not to fight. I was the weird one to forcefully make him fight.

"Now then, have you calmed down, Aries?"

"Y—Yes."

That face with the teary eyes and blushing nose did not look like a guy at all. I wasn't into traps, so I didn't think much of it. But Dina, who returned unobserved, was smiling brightly.

She, who was disgusted by the orcs, seemed to find his appearance appealing. After seeing him, she gradually came to like it... Or perhaps, did she work diligently for me because she liked my appearance?

"I'm not good at elaboration, so I'll make it simple. I'm currently on a journey to recover the Twelve Heavenly Stars, and one of them is right before me. No need to say anything, just follow me. I won't accept any objections."

"Yes! With pleasure!"

Originally, I intended to let the Twelve Heavenly Stars return to the tower, but it was a significant distance away from here. Or rather, if I let this guy go back alone, he would definitely become a lost child. He was an excellent party member, and could make himself useful, so I decided to let him come along.

Well, Aries was very happy too, so this seemed to be the correct decision.

"Let's work hard together, Ruphas-sama! And... that stranger over there, please take care of me!"

"!?"

Dina froze as if traumatized.

Ah, hm. Traumatized by being addressed as a stranger.

I was the same as Aries. When I first met her, I forgot about her and asked, "Who are you?". Dina recovered quickly to meet Aries' eyes again, and smiled. No, if one looked careful, her veins had obviously popped.

"Aries-sama? Have we not met before? Right? I was always in that tower."

At Dina's prompting, Aries seemed to have remembered something from the distant

past. After a while, he exclaimed, "Oh! Are you that person who have a weak presence and constantly blends into the background?"

"You're terrible!?"

Dina was traumatized once more as I looked at her crying face.

Ah, it couldn't be helped. That was Dina for you. Because in the game, she was really part of the background. She never made an appearance, and her abilities were never mentioned. If she wasn't so lively in this world, I wouldn't even remember her.

"I'm so surprised! You can actually move out of that place."

"Am I an ornament?"

"You can even talk!"

"Ruphas-sama! This kid is unabashedly saying cruel things with a cute face!?"

Pitiful Dina. If she had such talents and liveliness two hundred years ago, she wouldn't have been treated like this. Or rather, why was she considered part of the background back then? Was she a quiet introvert in the past?

A person could change in two hundred years... But I felt she would have changed too much. Anyway, it was too pathetic. I should put an end to this quickly.

"Aries. Dina has been supporting me since my return to this world... Don't bully her too much."

"Eh? This... I wasn't bullying her... I was merely speaking my mind."

"That's even worse!"

Ah, so that was it. Aries was just innocently honest. Well, it seemed like Dina would be troubled for a while.



"—And so Aries has been successfully recovered. While I was at it, Mars of the Seven Luminaries has also been defeated. Be at ease."

"...The hardship we went through these few years..."

After recovering Aries, I revisited Megrez's house in the noble's district. I was wondering how to get past the guards, but it seemed Megrez already told them to let me pass when I visited previously.

Aries simply looked too different in his humanoid form. Nobody would associate this feminine youth with a giant sheep that was over one hundred meters tall. Well, I was the one responsible for setting his appearance like this.

"What about the monsters?"

"I tamed all of them. They won't attack anyone unless provoked."

"The monsters in that castle numbered several hundreds... The overlord's leadership has not weakened after two hundred years. This is really scary."

Oh sorry, it had probably weakened, because I was different on the inside. But it could not be said, so I frantically bluffed through this with a confident laughter.

"What would you do next?"

"Of course, I will recover the Twelve Heavenly Stars, then..."

Then... what?

I was unfamiliar with the geography of this age. I knew of the map in the game, but after my empire was destroyed, the heroes rebuilt new nations over it. Better let Dina to continue with her explanations.

"The next destination is the Black-Winged Royal Tomb. It is about five hundred kilometers away from here, and is guarded by one of the Twelve Heavenly Stars, Libra of the Scales."

"The name seems to indicate that it's my tomb."

"It is in fact Ruphas-sama's tomb. It was completed one hundred ninety years ago. Ruphas-sama's admirers spent ten years to build the world's largest monument—a great pyramid with one hundred and eight floors. The highest floor contained treasures, equipment, and weapons previously used by Ruphas-sama. It is guarded by Libra for one hundred ninety years without resting."

"Oh, so it's Libra?"

Twelve Heavenly Stars, Libra of the Scales.

She was probably the most powerful golem in X-Gate Online.

Her construction materials were gained by defeating an event boss. There were only two Selection Scales in the game. She was then created by Mizar (cash player), who was a Level 200 alchemist, before transferring to me. Therefore, she was of a higher level than I could have created.

I mentioned previously that the quality of the materials could increase the level cap of the creation. The Selection Scales allowed the level to be capped at 1,000. Since her creator Mizar was a Level 200 alchemist, the formula would be  $1,000 \div 2 + 200$ . In other words, the golem could reach up to Level 700.

(Golems were considered items, so they could be traded.)

Adding the rare item orichalcum (cash item) would randomly increase the golem's level by ten to thirty percent. Luckily, her level increased by +210.

In other words, Libra was a Level 910 golem. What Mizar and I created was essentially a super golem. There was still a rule that it could not exceed the master's level, so she would weaken if used by a low-level player. This was not an issue for me since I was at Level 1,000.

By the way, Libra should be the strongest among the Twelve Heavenly Stars in terms of offensive power... Sometimes even stronger than me. After all, she inherited the unique skill of the boss Scales of the Goddess, which we fought to gain the aforementioned Selection Scales.

The Scales of the Goddess was a gatekeeper in Alovenus' Sanctuary, a super difficult dungeon. It was very challenging for players. This scary gatekeeper wiped out weak players without fail, using a fatal skill called Brachium.

Its effect was—penetration of defenses and auto-hit with fixed 99,999 damage.

Naturally, this was not an attack that normal players could withstand. Flügel and vampires, with their naturally high statuses, normally had around 70,000 HP at Level 1,000. Thus, this terrifying attack could only be endured by players who used a lot of ability boost potions. Except for top players, everybody else would be wiped out. Even Megrez, a specialized rear-guard with lower HP, would die from this attack.

If one cannot pass through this stage, one would be disqualified from meeting the goddess, so it was extremely harsh. The entirety of the event involved defeating the gatekeeper and clearing the insanely difficult dungeon to meet with the goddess for reward.

Yet this golem had such a ridiculous skill. When used by the boss, it could be fired repeatedly. Although the skill had been reduced to once per twenty-four hours, it was still a threat. I remembered it clearly. When used as a preemptive strike, this skill could wipe out the opponents and induce fear even in allies.

The problem is... the computer's AI was lousy. Once the skill recharged, the AI would use it even on grunt enemies, resulting in the inability to use the skill when it was really needed.

Ah, I believed this game-breaking skill was obviously the fault of administrators who failed to balance the game properly. It would probably be patched in the next update, but the final battle happened before the update and I arrived in this world.

So she was the guardian.

I didn't know why anyone would rob my tomb, but if she was there, it would all end in tears. In the current world, probably nobody besides Levia could break through.

"I have also heard about Libra. She would mechanically and unconditionally eliminate anyone coming to the top floor. Some tried to negotiate with her, but it seemed to have failed."

Megrez said in a troubled voice and sighed. I thought that was at least better than going on a rampage like Aries, but it seemed this wasn't the case for Megrez?

"Then, if we just leave her alone... By the way, why are so many people trying to rob my tomb?"

"There is a problem. Over the past two hundred years, not only are our people weakened, even our weapons and equipment have degraded. Especially legendary-grade magic swords and armors. These were virtually lost in the battle against the Demon King. The only ones left are those kept in your tomb."

Legendary-grade weapons. It seemed only greed for rare weapons could make players so persistent. Many items and weapons, especially those from events hosted by administrators, were often otherwise unobtainable and therefore very expensive.

"Currently, for the people pressured by the demons, these items were the stuff of dreams. The tomb has its dangers, but the weapons stored there could potentially turn the tide for our people... However, thanks to that golem, nobody could acquire them."

Indeed, it must be that idiotic skill with fixed 99,999 damage. Its only weakness was being limited to a single shot. However, the people today probably needed to put their lives on the line just to get to the top floor. In the crowded area, they probably all died instantly from the massive damage.

"Hmm... I can't blame her, although she really is causing trouble for people. From my perspective, she is a loyal subject who protects my legacy after I left. I have no reason to admonish her."

"I understand. If it is possible, we would like to have any unwanted things you could spare from the tomb, after you retrieved Libra. I know this is a shameless request."

"Hmm. That's still acceptable."

Still, it was really weird for the tomb owner to agree to a request to rob her own tomb.

In any case, I decided on the next destination.

It would be unreasonable to not comfort Libra who had been working without rest for one hundred ninety years.



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## ※ Author's Notes: Skills & Classes

People of this world accept game concepts like classes, levels, and skills, even though video games do not exist. The system was introduced by the goddess Alovenus. All skills and magic are gifts from the goddess, and the native people do not think of creating their own skills. Only the irregular Ruphas has this concept.

Basically, these powers were created for the humanoid races, and only they could change classes. A monster remains a monster, regardless of what it does. Orc alchemists and similar things do not appear 100% of the time. Class change is said to be a blessing given to the humanoid races by the goddess who loves humanity.

However, the demons also have a similar ability, so there are some who doubts the goddess' blessing. Two hundred years after the defeat of the humanoids, the goddess would neither improve the system nor punish the demons, despite the wishes of many.

## ※ Foot Notes

**Orichalcum** is a semi-legendary metal, possibly a copper alloy. Plato mentioned that it was second only to gold in value, and was mined in Atlantis.

**Brachium**, also called Sigma Librae, is a binary star in the constellation of Libra.

**Humanoid** is a collective term for various human-like creatures in fantasy settings. In the novel, there are two words which could confusingly mean the same thing ("human") but are used differently. The first word (人間) is used specifically for actual humans, while the second word (人類) is used as a collective term to include demi-human races like dwarves and elves. To avoid confusion, this translation will use the word "human" for the first (人間) and the word "humanoid" for the second (人類).

# Chapter 19

## Mars Released; Farewell, Mars

I tied my hair in a pony-tail, and put on the plain spectacles. This alone greatly changed the impressions I gave to others.

My clothes was changed from the white dress to a white tunic and black trousers, with the usual crimson cloak added on top of them. But unlike how I used to wear it to cover my entire body, the cloak was merely hung over my shoulders.

Finally, Dina added the bandages to hide my black wings. The unthinkable happened. My wings vanished from sight, thus I wouldn't be recognized as a flügel.

This was the camouflage ribbon created for me by Megrez. It was enchanted with stealth magic, causing the affected body parts to blend into the surroundings and disappear. After saying that it must be difficult for me to move in my previous state, he generously gave me the entire costume set.

"How is it? Megrez, does it suit me?"

"It will suit you, no matter what you wear."

Thanks to Megrez, I was finally free from self-bondage. Honestly, I didn't expect him to go so far for me. For his past enemy to be suddenly revived, it would be natural for him to be hostile. Despite this, he still supported me. It was hard to not suspect that it might be a trap.

"Ruphas..."

"Hm?"

"You... Do you hate us? Back then, you nearly reached your ideals and achieved the future of your dreams. It was our treachery that ruined it... Do you not have feelings of hate?"

I pondered Megrez's words for a while. I didn't hate him, and I wouldn't seek revenge. The fight was just a game to me. It was not what I personally experienced. Instead of answering the question directly, I decided to respond in my own way.

"If the people rebelled, it implied that I did not have the qualifications of a king. If you guys resisted out of malcontent, then I was simply lacking. I have no reason to hate you guys."

I checked my appearance in the mirror, and made poses from various angles.

Hm. Not bad.

There was nothing better than wearing something that was easy to move in. Although I would be conspicuous due to my looks, it was still ten times better than being a suspicious person completely covered in a red cloak.

Although I said this myself, this face was exceptional even without make-up... This was like what was seen in the idol photos after being enhanced by Photoshop.

"So stop blaming yourself. Honestly, you are so pathetic right now."

Ruphas was the invader. He was the hero who defeated her. This was all that mattered two hundred years ago, and it was fine. History was written by the victors. As the loser, I could not complain about it, and I had no desire to do so. However, it was unacceptable for the victor to be miserable instead.

"You are a hero to the people of this nation. Stand dignified before me, as you did two hundred years ago."

"I'm much obliged to heed your advice... Thank you."

A faint smile returned to Megrez's face.

This guy was overly serious. He would probably still be troubled after this, but at least he should be better than before. Actually, we should be the ones to apologize. That androgynous sheep in the corner should be apologizing to Megrez, but...

Aries simply refused to apologize to the people who betrayed his master.

"Well then, I should be leaving. Would there be a problem with Levia after being weakened by Aries?"

"Thank you. As I am right now, I cannot recover the lost maximum HP."

Aries' attack reduced Levia's maximum HP, but it was possible to recover it as long as there was water to use as base material. However, the current Megrez no longer had the ability to do so, therefore I would do it instead.

How convenient it was to be able to recover as long as there was water. Anyway, as long as Levia was here, there should not be any problem.

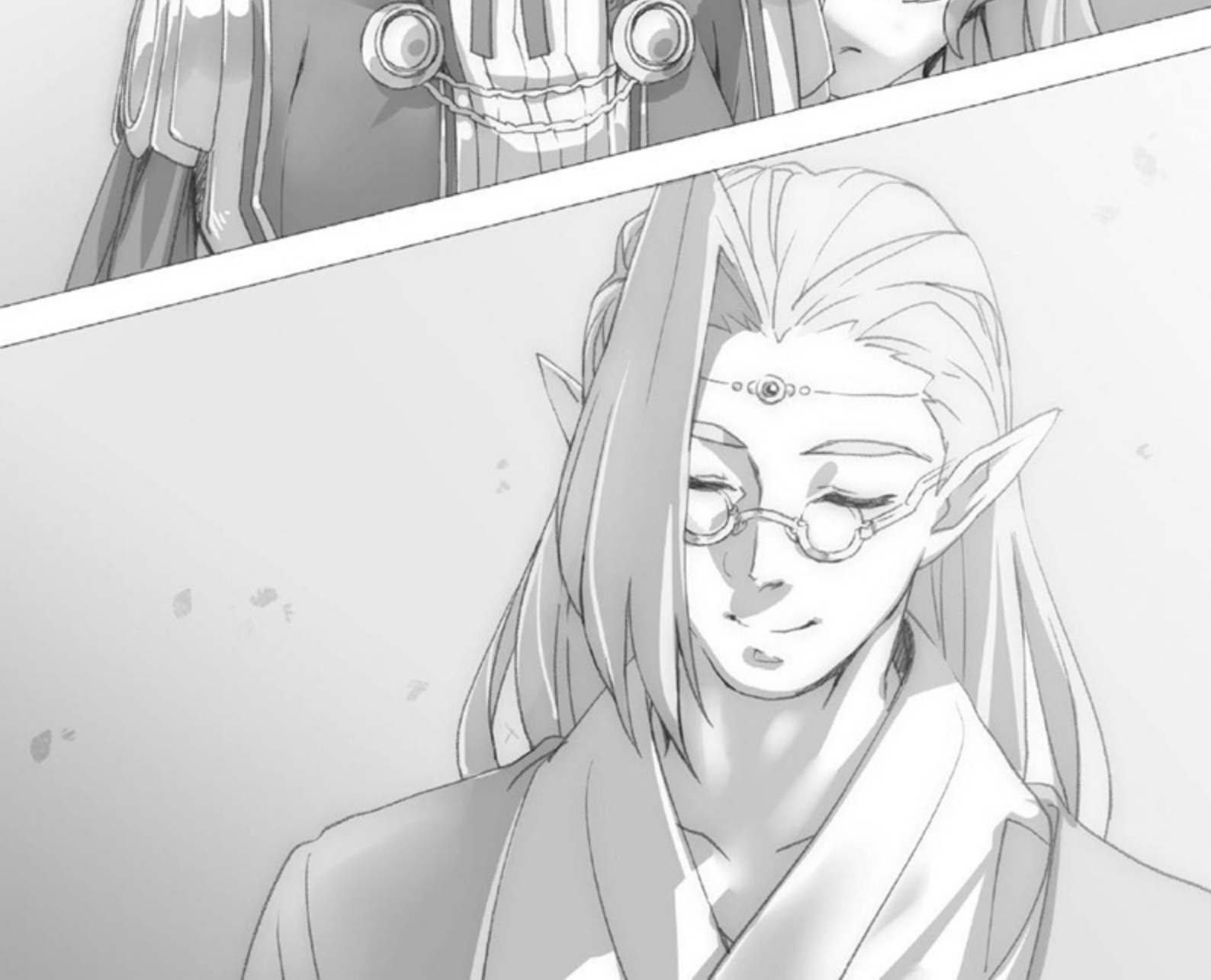
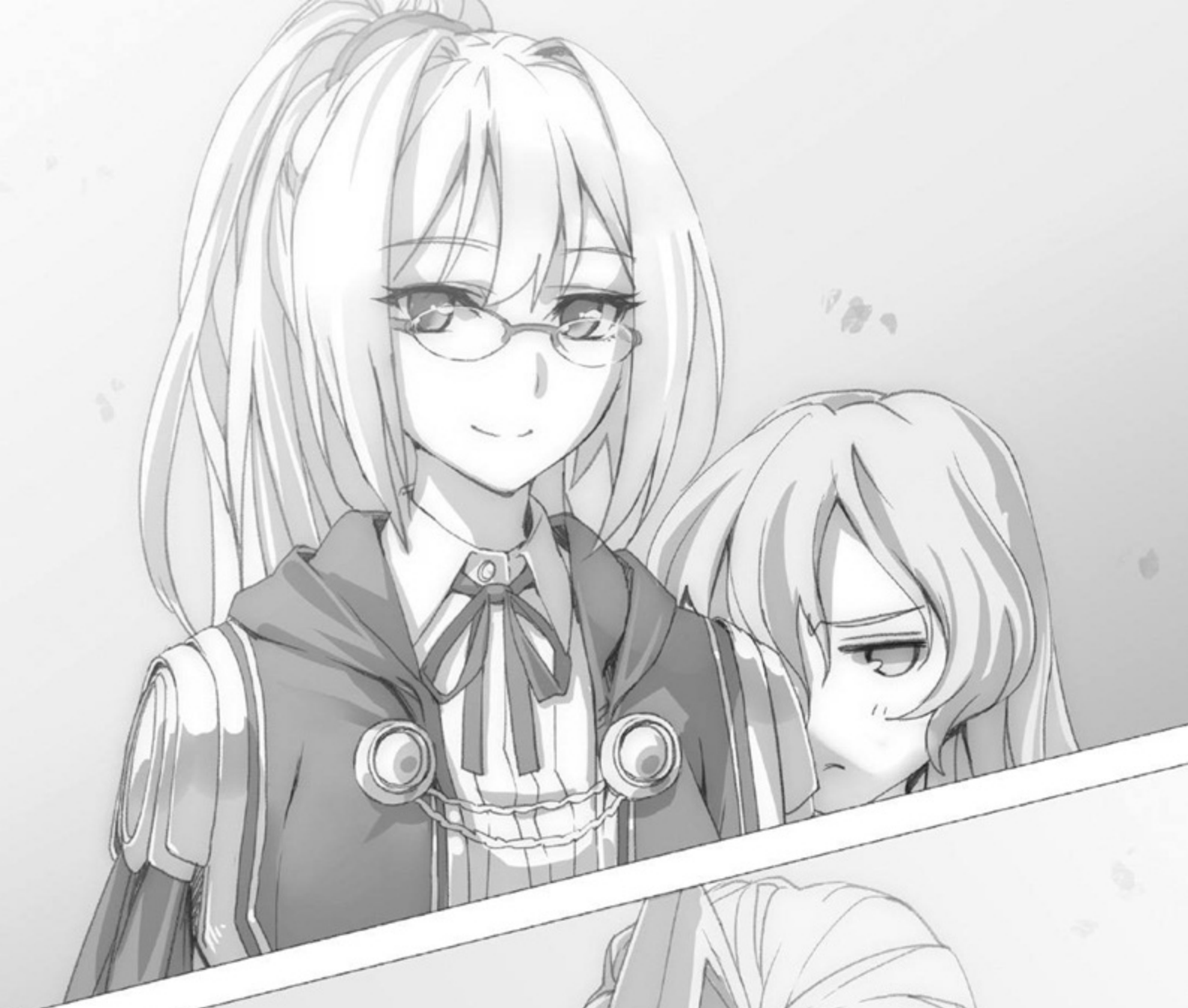
"Ruphas."

"Yes?"

"...Have a pleasant trip."

"That goes without saying."

I smiled unintentionally, as I received Megrez's encouragement. I waved my hand and left Megrez's home, passing through the noble's district for the commercial district.



Along the way, I noticed Gants' signature bald head and decided to bid him farewell.

"Gants!"

"Hm? Oh! What a beauty! Mi—Miss, what can I do for you?"

"Hey, there's no need for this manner of speech. I'm Saphur. You assisted me when I first arrived here."

"...Huh? Eh—?"

Gants exclaimed in a tongue-tied manner after hearing my words. I supposed Gants never saw my real face. This was a mistake, but I would be leaving Svalinn soon anyway.

"That suspicious, red-cloaked Sa—Saphur!? To think you are such a beauty!"

"Hahaha. Your praises are excessive. I wanted to greet you since I'll be leaving this country."

"We are indebted to you, Gants-san. We will return when we are done with our trip."

I laughed at Gants, who was shocked, as Dina said her farewell.

Aries... Was there something wrong? He just hid his face behind my back. This guy was becoming like a small animal.

"Oh, is it? Leaving huh. You two... and that cute young lady there, take care."

"He is a guy."

"Really!?"

"Haha. Well, Gants. We'll meet again."

"Oh, ah... Saphur... no, never mind. Be lively! And take care!"

After bidding Gants farewell, we departed from Svalinn to begin our journey.

At the end, Gants seemed to have something to say, but he did not voice it aloud. He probably wanted to ask me about sending Aries flying with a kick during that battle, yet he still did not ask anything. Did he guess at our complicated situation?

Or maybe he was somewhat aware of my true identity. Even so, he seemed like a pleasant man. I wished he had a long life ahead of him.



"Dina. The destination is five hundred kilometers from here. How should we travel? I don't mind going on foot."

"I have a proposal! How about creating a golem that can move us around?"

"You don't like walking?"

"I hate it! It's tiring!"

After leaving Svalinn, it was a grassland as far as the eyes could see. Although there were roads being made, it would normally be depressing to keep walking on like this. The current me wouldn't be tired no matter how far I walked, so I could still enjoy myself.

Was there anything more romantic than traveling this distance on foot?

But Dina hated it and requested making a transport golem.

As evident in this world, golems were not stupid and inflexible like those in a game. For example, golems in a game would repeatedly attack an enemy in the same way. But here, Levia could understand Megrez's directions and take actions intelligently.

In addition, there was no restriction on its shape. For example, I could create a car-shaped golem and used it as an automobile. Therefore, it was easy to fulfill Dina's request.

"Hm. Why don't you try making it?"

"Let's include beds and bathroom in it so we won't have to camp out."

The plan was upgraded as Dina requested. I originally intended to make a convertible, but now it became a camping car instead.

Aries looked at me with expectations, despite not being assertive. It was as if he was looking forward to what I would do next.

"Well, let's try."

Firstly, most of the vehicle was made of iron, using the ores found in the rocks as a material. The furniture could be left for later.

For the bathroom, a *goemonburo* bath should be fine. The bath of this world was normally *goemonburo* style. There was no convenient, contemporary bath, and I could not make it as I did not know the details of how it worked.

For the beds, it was possible to shape the frame out of wood. The problem was the mattress and the bed cover. There were only trees and rocks here, so I could only produce concrete and iron materials.

But if there were cotton or feathers...

"...Ah."

"? What's wrong, Ruphas-sama? Is there something on my face?"

There was cotton nearby.

Well then, we could shave Aries in his sheep form.

There was enough materials for the bare minimum requirements. If I did this, it would be ready.

"Transmute!"

First, the iron ores in the rocks were refined.

Extraction and refinement of materials were among the basic skills of an alchemist. However, class level determined the type of materials that could be transmuted. At that start, an alchemist could not transmute one material into another material. A



Level 200 alchemist like Mizar could perform frightening feats, like transmuting rocks into legendary metals. I only advanced to Level 100, so I could not do so.

Then, the freshly refined iron was reshaped into a camping car. I did not know the inner workings of a car, so I merely made an outer shell. Movement would be achieved via the golem's own mobility, therefore no driver's seat was needed.

Next, the sand was transmuted into glass, and attached to the windows. There were several rooms inside, one of which contained a *goemonburo* bath tub. There was also a traditional kitchen, matching the civilization level of this world.

"Next... Aries, change into your sheep form."

"Eh?"

"I need your wool."

Considering the size of Aries' sheep form, only a little of his wool was needed to make the beds. And it would grow back eventually anyway.

I jumped onto Aries' back and, using my hand as a knife, cut some of his wool. The wool were then made into mattresses. By this world's standards, they would be considered surprisingly luxurious and fluffy. I also created some wooden chairs set with cushions made from Aries' wool.

"Okay. This is it for the time being."

Whatever else was missing could be bought from the cities in future. For now, it was good enough that it could move.

I should check the status of the camping car that I put in so much effort to create.

Oh, I must name it first before its status could be shown.

Golems could be named at the time of their creation. In the game, there were golems everywhere with familiar-sounding names. For example, Gund@m or Gett3r.

So what should I name this one?

Nothing too pretentious or easily forgotten...

...What a hassle. Tanaka, it is.

### **Tanaka**

Level: 200

Race: Artificial Life-form

HP: 12,000

SP: 0

STR (Strength): 555

DEX (Dexterity): 120

VIT (Vitality): 658

INT (Intelligence): 9

AGI (Agility): 1020

MND (Mind): 75

LUK (Luck): 100

It seemed the attributes were adjusted according to its shape. This did not exist in the game. Its speed is exceptionally high because it was shaped like a vehicle.

However, this AGI attribute represented its agility and action speed during combat, instead of mere movement speed. A high AGI value did not necessarily mean fast movement speed.

Even so, I was confident that I would win in a race with this vehicle.

"As expected of Ruphas-sama! It would be more convenient now that we have this."

Pragmatic as she was, Dina praised me as if she wasn't complaining earlier. Aries also nodded, but since his praise was sincere and straightforward, I would accept it.

*But you should transform back first. At this size, merely nodding your head causes a gust of wind.*

We got in the vehicle, and I issued a command to travel north. The vehicle started to move out as though it understood the order. With this, we could proceed comfortably until we reached our destination.

"Oh, right. I will acquire some necessary furniture. I will teleport to buy it, so please

wait."

After saying this, Dina vanished before I could reply.

This teleportation magic was really convenient. I was envious.

Still, why didn't I fly over to Svalinn instead of going on a carriage?

Dina could just teleport herself there anyway.

Well, it was too late now. Since Aries was here, we could not that anymore.

Eh, why didn't I think of it back then?

I couldn't understand.

Well, whatever. In the meantime, I should rearrange the interior furnishing.



"Ha... ha..."

At the foot of Gale Volcano.

A youth dragged his injured body, crawling as he bled along the way.

It was just one blow—one casual blow as if it was made against an annoying insect.

Even so, he could not even stand right now. He crawled on like an insect, desperately trying to escape from the opponent who was no longer there.

"Ru—Ruphas Mafahl... The only devil that we feared is back... This is a nightmare... suc—such a thing..."

Fortunately, he was at Level 300. Since he was not a worthy opponent, Ruphas did not deal with him seriously and he somehow survived. It was a humiliation to be overlooked, but this luck also allowed him to survive until now.

However, his good fortune would not last forever...

"—Oh. You're still alive."

He heard a cold, condescending voice.

Mars struggled to turn his unmoving body in the direction of that voice. A blue-haired maiden standing there. Her face could not be seen due to back-lighting, but the white plain clothes seemed like a fine dress when worn by her.

Was this elegance?

Or perhaps it should be called presence?

In any case, no word could express the mystique possessed by this girl.

That face—no, that mouth was distorted in an arc like a half-moon and was filled with joy.

"No, no. An actor who finished his role must exit gracefully. Nobody would benefit from a defeated chess piece reappearing at a later stage for extra credits. After finishing your role, you should leave. That's the rule of the game."

"You... You are..."

The maiden laughed at the poor clown who completed his role. She did not answer his question. As for letting him have his last words, she did not feel like providing such a service.

Just promptly and beautifully...

She ended his life as if pulling out some weeds.

The maiden had only such a spirit of cruelty.

"Farewell, Mars. Pathetic NPC."

—Several seconds later, the youth vanished.

As if he never existed to begin with, there was no trace of him, not even a strand of

hair.

Also, the maiden responsible for all this was nowhere to be seen.

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### ※ Author's Notes

Translator: Nothing noteworthy, just some stuffs about Megrez getting verbally abused.

### ※ Foot Notes

**Svalinn** (スヴェル) is a legendary shield that stands before the sun in Norse mythology. In this novel, various cities are named after objects and places from Norse mythology. Svalinn is the city-state founded by Megrez. "Suvell" is a mistranslation.

**Goemonburo** (五右衛門風呂) is a type of *furo* (Japanese bath), often associated with Ishakawa Goemon.

**Gund@m** (ガン@m) probably refers to Gundam (ガンダム), an anime series featuring giant robots of the same name.

**Gett3r** (ゲッ@ー) probably refers to Getter Robo (ゲッターロボ), another mecha anime series.

**Tanaka** (田中) probably refers to Tanaka Hisashige (田中久重), who was known for making autonomous dolls powered by springs, pneumatics, and hydraulics... that, or maybe "camping car" just slightly sounds like (and rhymes with) *ta-na-ka*.



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